JANUARY 1981 NUMBER 35 $2.00

THE SPACE GAMER

THE MAGAZINE OF ADVENTURE GAMING

1980 GAME SURVEY

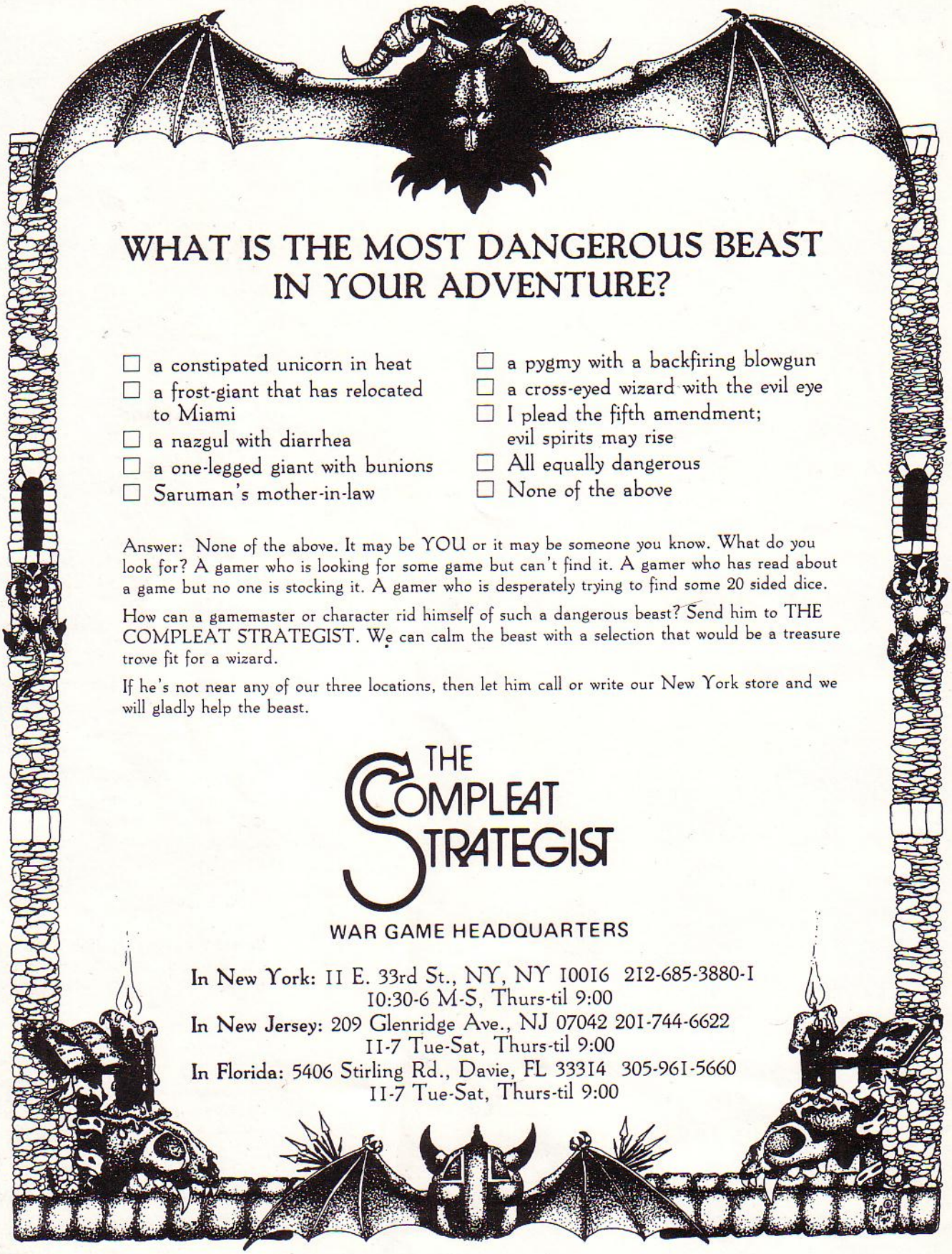
THE WAR OF THE WORLDS

NOTES FOR NOVICE DMS

PSIONICS IN *TRAVELLER*

SOLITAIRE OGRE

AND 9 PAGES OF REVIEWS



WHAT IS THE MOST DANGEROUS BEAST IN YOUR ADVENTURE?

- ☐ a constipated unicorn in heat
- ☐ a frost-giant that has relocated to Miami
- ☐ a nazgul with diarrhea
- ☐ a one-legged giant with bunions
- ☐ Saruman's mother-in-law
- ☐ a pygmy with a backfiring blowgun
- ☐ a cross-eyed wizard with the evil eye
- ☐ I plead the fifth amendment; evil spirits may rise
- ☐ All equally dangerous
- ☐ None of the above

Answer: None of the above. It may be YOU or it may be someone you know. What do you look for? A gamer who is looking for some game but can't find it. A gamer who has read about a game but no one is stocking it. A gamer who is desperately trying to find some 20 sided dice.

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THE SPACE GAMER

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In This Issue

It's survey time again. This year, we've put the survey on the center four pages of the magazine, rather than the back cover – so you don't have to tear things up to return the survey. Of course, a Xerox copy is OK, too.

As usual, lots of reviews. The featured review is Task Force Games' new *The War of the Worlds*. It's about time somebody worked up a good game based on that old classic; good show, TFG! And, wending your way toward the back of the magazine, you'll find a generous sampling of capsules. (Thanks to all of you who have been sending those reviews in – and keep them coming!)

What else have we got? Well, you can't go wrong with a *Traveller* article or an *Ogre* variant; there's one of each. Lewis Pulsipher, that notorious raconteur of FRP gaming, has contributed some thoughts on the referee's role. And Nick Schuessler, in *Game Design*, tells you more about CRT design than you thought there was to know.

Gripe of the week: Why doesn't anyone send us some good D&D material? Or *RuneQuest*, T&T, or C&S? I mean, TFT is fine – but there are other games out there . . . How about it?

–SJ

THE SPACE GAMER

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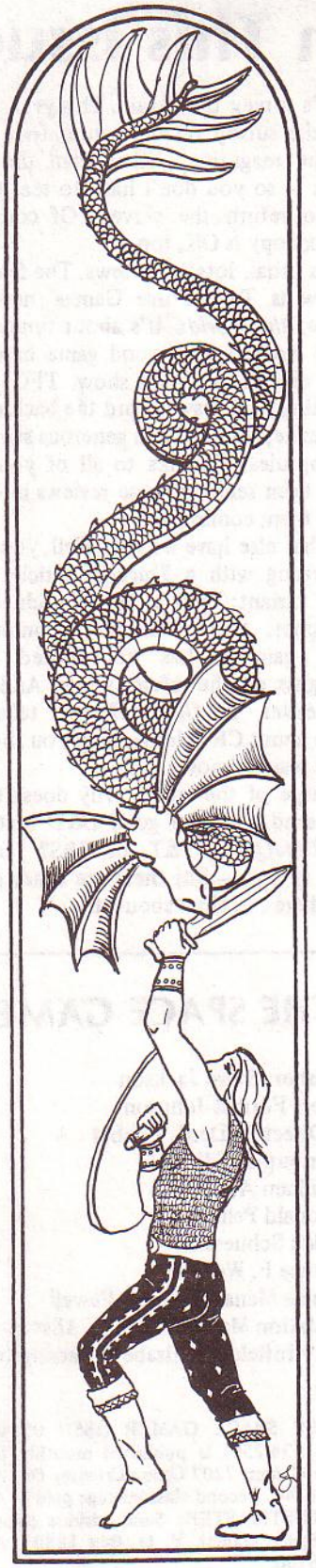


Errata

Contrary to what we reported in our survey, Bearhug Enterprises *does* sell by mail. A catalog is available. Write them at POB 12, Mission, Kansas 66201 or call 913/262-4453.

Where We're Going

I am sorry to have to report that my differences with Metagaming are apparently going to have to be resolved in court. Attempts at negotiation have failed and new problems continue to arise.

On October 15 – the scheduled release date for ONE-PAGE BULGE – our attorney received a letter from Howard Thompson, in which he claimed that "ONE-PAGE BULGE is the property of Metagaming" and demanded that we not publish it.

Thompson subsequently obtained a temporary restraining order which prohibited our selling or advertising ONE-PAGE BULGE. Since advertisements for that game appear in all our products, this order effectively closed down our business for about a week; it also delayed the appearance of the last TSG. Fortunately, our attorney was able to get the order modified, allowing us to ship the magazine and the other games.

On November 26, a hearing was held on the restraining order and on Metagaming's request for a permanent injunction. After hearing from both sides, the judge ruled in our favor, dissolving the TRO and refusing to grant an injunction. As reasons, he cited testimony indicating that (1) since the date in late December when Thompson had seen an early draft of the game and apparently rejected it, Metagaming had demonstrated no interest in publishing or working on the game until I had announced my own plans to publish it, and (2) during the intervening time (on May 9) Thompson and I had entered into a contract which very clearly disposed of all game-design matters

Next Issue

Our February issue will include an alternate ship damage system for Star Fleet Battles;

"The Pawn of the Fire Web," with a new artifact for Traveller;

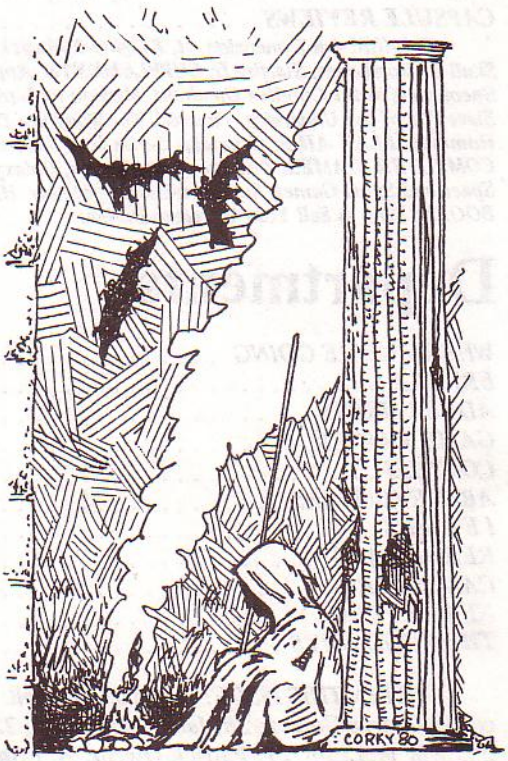
A featured review of the new computer adventure game Akalabeth;

A company report from Eon Products;

The winner of the computer graphics contest;

The '81 Origins Awards nominations ballot;

And enough capsule reviews to choke a sand worm.



pending between the two of us – and this contract did not mention ONE-PAGE BULGE. His conclusion was that Metagaming had no right to enjoin our publication of the game. This is *not* a ruling on the merits, though; Metagaming still has the right to press a claim before a trial court.

So – if your order for ONE-PAGE BULGE was a little late, that's why. But things are back to normal – for the moment – and all orders are being shipped as soon as we receive them. Thanks for your patience.

I apologize to those of you who don't like reading about lawsuits in TSG. Believe me – I don't like having to write about them. But I think that people have a right to know what's happening . . . and I have nothing to gain by concealing matters. I'd much rather everyone knew exactly what was going on than have rumors flying all over the hobby! If anyone wants to know all the details, they're public record; check Cause No. 314,286, Howard Thompson v. Steve Jackson, in the District Court of Travis County, Texas.

* * *

A brief note on SJ Games: everything seems to be going pretty well. The games are now being distributed in shops across the U.S., as well as Canada and Great Britain. RAID ON IRAN has been the best seller; the other three seem to be about even with each other at this point.

One interesting note: The big distributors have been very leery of CARDBOARD HEROES – a couple of distributors that gave us big orders for the other games wanted no Heroes at all. But the *shops* that ordered them seem to be doing pretty well . . . I know both of the Austin shops sold out of their first order very quickly. I don't know what that means, but it's interesting.

Future plans: still up in the air. We're working on several games; when it looks like one of them is a sure thing, I'll let you know. In the works are a couple of space games, a couple of fantasy, a historical game similar to ONE-PAGE BULGE, and one *wholly unclassifiable* little diversion. Watch this space for more info.

* * *

As you see, this issue is back to 32 pages. We had a couple of ads cancelled, and a couple more delayed until next issue – which took us back below the point at which we can afford 40 pages. We hope to be back up to 40 soon – cross your fingers.

–SJ

Hi! This is the editor. I'm not shy, I just don't use this space unless I have something to say. This month, I do:

1. The use of art in the gaming industry leaves a lot to be desired. New publishers often get by the first couple of years with third-rate art obtained from friends or playtesters, because they don't know of any artists less eminent (or expensive) than Frazetta. Meanwhile, a lot of talented but little-known artists are wasting their abilities, doing portraits of their D&D characters, because they have no contacts.

Starting yesterday, I am compiling a list of recommended artists, who are interested in working with game publishers. The list will be available to publishers on request. They will be able to see samples of the artists' work in the magazine before they send out that first inquiry.

2. Starting last year, *The Space Gamer* is interested in *every* science fiction and fantasy game publisher. In particular, we solicit "designer's notes" on recently-released games. An excellent example of what we like – Glenn Williams' article in issue 34. Glenn not only told us how he designed the game, he also included a set of rules which had been omitted because of design constraints, and some fascinating little modular articles. Very well done.

3. In some ways, this issue is very close to the priorities we got from the last survey – no fiction, lots of game articles, lots of reviews, and a three-page survey. Is this what you want? Yea or nay, please let us know.

4. As for those two Websters – Bruce and JD – I deny any responsibility for their choice of names.

Forrest Johnson

GAME MASTER

GAME MASTER exists to answer questions on your favorite games. If you have a rules question or play problem, send it in. Questions to be answered will be chosen on the basis of general interest. They will be first referred to the game publisher or designer. If no response is received, GAME MASTER will offer its own interpretation of the rule. Sorry – no individual replies are possible.

GAME MASTER also invites publishers to send errata or clarifications for their new games. They will be printed as space allows.

A recent review of Task Force Games' *Spellbinder* raised two questions concerning apparently illogical rules. Task Force has since informed us that those rules don't say quite what they were supposed to. R. Vance Buck writes with a clarification that solves both problems:

(1) A wizard does not exert a Zone of Control on an army unit; neither does an army unit exert a ZOC on a wizard. Armies do exert a ZOC on armies and wizards do exert a ZOC on other wizards.

(2) The Spellbinder and Regeneration spells **are** *"cast" on an opponent's wizard or army,* **but** *the results of the spell apply to the player casting the spell. A player may tell an ally that he is going to use one of these spells and the ally might agree to allow the player casting the spell to cast it on his (the ally's) wizard. However, he may wish to doublecross and block the spell. So, these spells* **do** *strengthen the player casting the spells, but like all of the other spells, they are not automatic and may be blocked with a defensive spell.*

Not many questions this month – and most of the ones we got were about TFT, and/or repeated questions we've already answered. How about some new problems?

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SOLITAIRE OGRE

by George Collins

My biggest disappointment with the game OGRE was the lack of detailed rules for solo play, since the game is perfect for it. There is a vague mention of Ogre "programming," in which the player writes down the Ogre's plan of attack in advance. Unfortunately, the game quickly becomes boring, because the defender always knows what to expect from the Ogre. And what fun is a game without surprises?

What is needed are rules which make the Ogre unpredictable but not haphazard. While programming a computer to play Ogre I created a set of rules by which you can decide how the Ogre will move and fire, simply by rolling dice. These rules are a compromise between random play and strategy. They work so well that no handicap is needed when playing most scenarios.

Setup. The human player always takes the defense. He picks his units and places them in accordance with the scenario he has chosen. The Ogre will enter at the bottom of the map on Turn 1, in the same hex-column as the CP.

Movement. If the top of the map is "north," then the Ogre will always move north, northeast, or northwest. Example: If the Ogre is in 2525, it may move NW to 2425, N to 2424, or NE to 2524.

The Ogre will always use all its available movement points. For every hex it is to enter, roll one die. A 1 or 2 means it will move NW. A 3 or 4 mean it will move N. A 5 or 6 mean it will move NE. However:

(a) The Ogre will never move NE on a turn when it has already moved NW, or vice versa. If this happens, roll again (unless no other movement is possible).

(b) The Ogre will not move into a crater or off the map-edge. If a die roll indicates that this happens, roll again.

(c) The Ogre will cease random movement when it comes within 3 hexes of the south edge of the map, OR 5 hexes of the CP. At that time it will move directly for the CP. It will not turn aside to ram units, but will ram them if they are in the way.

(d) Until it fulfills condition (c), the Ogre will ram enemy units whenever it can do so without turning around. It will sometimes turn around to ram a unit. See below.

Overruns. The Ogre will not change its course to overrun enemy infantry. However, it will overrun them if they are in the hex that it enters.

Ramming. If one of the three hexes in front of the Ogre (that is, N, NE or NW) contains an enemy unit, the Ogre will always enter that hex to ram/overrun. If there are more than one enemy units in front of the Ogre, the Ogre will choose one to ram, using the same priorities as for firing (below).

If there are units directly behind the Ogre, but no units directly in front, the Ogre may turn to ram one of those behind. It will not do this unless there is an enemy unit *adjacent* to it. To see whether it does so, roll one die. On a result of 6, it reverses one hex to ram an enemy behind (determine which one as described above). On any other result, it ignores the enemies behind it and moves normally.

If the Ogre rams an armor unit and merely disables it, roll one die. On a 5 or 6, it will stay in that hex, expending one movement point, to ram it again and destroy it. Otherwise, it moves on.

If the Ogre is down to 5 tread units or less, it will still overrun the CP or infantry if it can, but it will not ram any armor units other than howitzers unless it must do so in order to reach the CP.

Combat. After it finishes movement, the Ogre will fire its weapons in the following order:

(1) AP.
(2) Secondary batteries.
(3) Main batteries.
(4) Missiles.

If there are enough AP units to get more than a 1-1 attack on each adjacent infantry unit, the Ogre will divide its fire as evenly as possible between them, without "wasting" points. Example: It would never make more than a 3-1 AP attack on a single infantry unit, because a 3-1 attack insures its destruction.

If there are not enough AP units to get 1-1 attacks on all adjacent infantry, the Ogre will make as many 1-1 attacks as it can, and put the rest into a single 1-2, if possible.

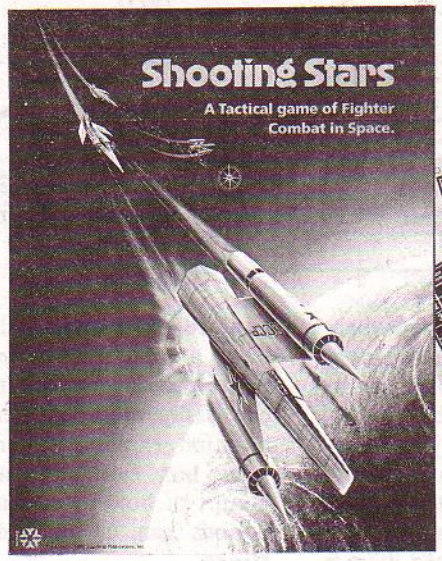
The secondary batteries fire after AP. Target priorities are: (1) the CP; (2) howitzers; (3) other armor units; (4) infantry. Given the choice, the Ogre will fire on a disabled unit rather than a non-disabled unit of the same priority. When the Ogre must choose between two units of the same priority, it picks one randomly (roll a die).

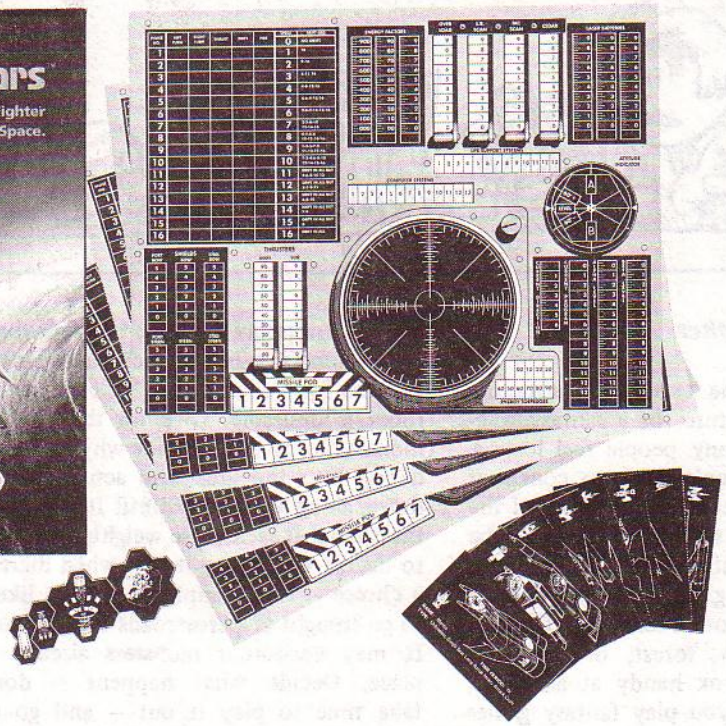
Main batteries fire after secondary batteries. They have the same targeting priorities. Note that each main and secondary gun fires individually. The Ogre never combines fire from any of its weapons except the AP units.

Missiles fire last. The Ogre will always fire a missile at a CP or howitzer within range. If there is no CP or howitzer within range, roll one die. On a 1 or 2 the Ogre will fire one missile. It picks its targets as above, except that GEVs have a higher priority than tank units, and missiles are never wasted on infantry.

Leaving the board. If the Ogre succeeds in destroying the CP, it will try to leave the map. Substitute SE, S, and SW for NE, N, and NW in the movement rules, and continue play. When the Ogre gets within 10 hexes of the S map edge it will head directly for that edge, ignoring opportunities to ram. If it makes it, the robot has beaten you!

Shooting Stars™





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- Vector Movement

Components: The boxed game components include a 21½" by 27½" mapboard, a sheet of die cut unit counters, game table cards, Ship Specification Cards for the major crafts used in the game, Ship Control Console Cards, a complete rule book with scenarios, two dice and a sturdy plastic tray.

Scale: 100 Kilometers per hex, 5-10 seconds per Turn, individual ships.

Number of Players: Two to Four

Average Playing Time: Thirty minutes to three hours depending on scenario.

Shooting Stars is a tactical level game of fighter vs. fighter combat beginning in the near future. Scenarios range from the first U.S.-Soviet Space War, to Asteroid Pirates, to Alien invaders. The unique movement system gives the feel of piloting a one man craft in space while at the same time providing a fast paced, smooth flowing game. The Advanced Game and Optional Rules allow for Energy usage in fifteen areas of ship's functions and provide a myriad of special weapons. Scenarios range from Solitaire scenarios such as battling an unmanned outpost, destroying "Rebel Blockade runners" and protecting an Orbital Depot from "Asteroid Pirates" to multi player situations where a group of fighters attack a space station. Ship Specification cards provide information for eight different types of fighter craft, while the scenarios provide the information for space stations, larger craft, the movement of Asteroids, fighting in the gravity influence of a Black Hole and much, much more.

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Notes for Novice Dungeon Masters

by Lewis Pulsipher

Faced with the task of constructing a place of adventure for a fantasy role-playing game, many people feel lost. A serious gamer won't want to construct and populate the area by means of die rolls and tables; such places tend to be dull and unbelievable.

The first thing to do is get a small notebook to devote exclusively to ideas for the dungeon, forest, or whatever. Keep the notebook handy at all times, especially when you play fantasy games or read fiction. Countless good ideas have been lost solely because memory is frail. When you get an idea – and you will, regardless of how difficult it seems at first – write it down immediately. When you have a spare moment, read through your "idea book" to embellish on the notes; you'll also find that the old ideas generate new ones. As you play games or read rules think about the implications of ideas which, in themselves, are not useful. The most offhand joking remark of a fellow player can stimulate a fruitful train of thought.

Second, read the rules again and again. Not only will this improve your efficiency, it will stimulate ideas. What would happen if this spell were used in that situation? What spells or traps would a high level magic-user use to protect himself? What if these two monsters joined forces? And so on.

Third, read from the sourcebooks listed at the end of this article. Any fantasy or science fiction story can suggest usable ideas, but the books listed are particularly helpful.

Now with the ideas from your notebook you'll find it easy to construct places of adventure. Don't worry too much about why the place exists, though a good rationale will guide you in construction and population. Dungeons and other such monster-infested places tend to be artificial in any case, and no reason at all is better than a silly reason such as "the mad wizard built it."

Random population can be used where inspiration fails, but in such cases a more realistic form than dicing for each hex or room is desirable. Dice for the kind of monster to be used, decide why it is wandering into the area, and actually let it move along your map until it (or they) finds what it seeks. Use weighted die rolls to decide which way it goes when there is a choice – for example, it is more likely to go straight at a crossroads than to turn. It may encounter monsters already in place. Decide what happens – don't take time to play it out – and go on from there. Groups may be decimated or wiped out, others may coalesce, inhabitants will build additions to the area, and slowly the population will increase. Not only is this more interesting than straight dice rolling, it results in a more believable place without (for example) monsters occupying a room accessible only through another room which is occupied by other monsters which are naturally hostile to the first group.

Unless you have very strong conceptions, it is better not to try to plan an entire world at once. Most referees change their views as they gain experience, and their initial efforts go into the inactive file. Don't spend a lot of time on details you're likely to change later. Stick to the construction of an interesting localized place of adventure, whether dungeon, city, forest, or island.

When you do plan the world you'll probably borrow ideas from many sources including historical literature and films as well as fiction. There's nothing wrong with this – original ideas are rare – but don't borrow literally and don't base the entire world on one author's conceptions. Whatever you have read the players may have read also. If they recognize your source, and you haven't deviated significantly from that source, the entire adventure or campaign may be ruined.

Some advice about mechanics is called for. Make a time chart using one square per melee round, or turn, or segment (depending on which rules you use). Put it in a plastic sheet protector and use grease pencil to mark off game time. You can easily indicate when spells of long duration expire by marking the appropriate box. During non-melee movement, groups of boxes constituting longer time periods can be marked with a single stroke.

Roll dice for wandering monster appearance and characteristics before the game begins. You can mark the time of appearance on your time chart. The more you prepare before the game starts, the smoother and more enjoyable it will be for all participants.

Use a square-grid board for indoor action and a hex grid for outdoors. It is easy to convert movement rates to a number of squares or hexes (depending on scale) and a board with definite locations eliminates much argument inherent in miniatures gaming methods. Use metal miniature figures or cardboard pieces for player characters, and numbered cardboard for monsters. The latter make it easier to differentiate between several creatures of the same species.

Sourcebooks

The most obscure but most important sourcebook is a massive six-volume work, *Motif Index to Folklore Literature* by Stith Thompson. It consists entirely of listings of motifs (basic plot elements) of folk stories from around the world. From these you can derive events, scenarios, villains, and magic items. Some sections are more useful than others, and it usually isn't worth reading every motif, as most are variations in minor details of more general beliefs. You'll need access to a good university library to find this work, but it's worth the search.

The second source you should read is Thomas *Bullfinch's Mythology*, a nineteenth century retelling of Greek, French, British, and other myths and legends. The adventures of Charlemagne's knights are particularly germane to fantasy role-

playing.

Any gazetteer (for example, in an atlas or dictionary) will supply you with strange names. (Did you know that Gondor is an area in Turkey as well as a country of Middle-earth?) A foreign language can be used for character names when invention fails you. In an English-Danish dictionary, for example, you could look up words like hero, lightning, thief, and use the foreign equivalent as a name.

More Sourcebooks

J.R.R. Tolkien: *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. Many gamers adopt Tolkien's dwarf and elf societies. Balrogs, ents, and orcs are famous monsters. The Fellowship's trip through the Mines of Moria makes an excellent introductory scenario since most novice players have read the trilogy and can identify immediately with the characters even if they don't understand the numbers assigned to them.

Michael Moorcock: Elric, Hawkmoon, Corum, and Eternal Champion series (c. 20 books). Some gamers use the semi-elven races (Sidhe, Vadagh). There are many characters of demigod proportions, and magical artifacts of similar power (such as Elric's sword Stormbringer), but few monsters in all those words. Moorcock is originator (or, rather, popularizer) of the struggle between Law and Chaos.

Andre Norton: *Witch World* series (8 books). Many magic-haunted places can be adapted to your wilderness; describes a closed magic-user group, all females.

Fritz Lieber: Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser series (c. 6 books). Lankhmar is the quintessential swords and sorcery city. The Sinking Land is worth putting in your world, as well as a scattering of monsters and bizarre societies.

Philip Jose Farmer: World of the Tiers series (5 books). A Lord's stronghold would make a wild (and dangerous) technological adventure setting. Black bellers, the horn of Shambarimen, and the half-horse are other useful ideas. The unique artificial nature of each Lord's world could be incorporated into a multiversal campaign.

Stephen Donaldson: *Chronicles of Thomas Covenant* trilogy. Ur-viles and ravers are fine monsters; the tunnels beneath Mt. Thunder would make a good scenario. (A *Dungeons and Dragons* version of the monsters is in White Dwarf no. 16.)

Piers Anthony: Xanth trilogy. Plenty of ideas for magic spells or items and monsters, especially plants. How about a wand enabling the user to speak with inanimate objects?

Jack Vance: *The Dying Earth, Eyes of the Overworld.* Original source for much of the D&D magic system; describes a few monsters and magic items and a very strange way of life in a magical world.

Christopher Stasheff: *The Warlock in Spite of Himself* and *King Kobold.* Features psychic "magicans" in a world where they are hated. An interesting touch is witch moss, a substance which can be shaped to create a new creature which will breed true.

Gordon Dickson: *The Dragon and the George.* Shows what more-or-less neutral, not-too-intelligent dragons are like. Sand-mirks are unusual monsters. Gives another view of the struggle for cosmic balance.

Roger Zelazny: Amber series (5 books), *Creatures of Light and Darkness, Lord of Light.* Amber is good for demigods and interplanar travel; "trumps" are good magic items. Magical artifacts, and Zelazny's incarnations of Egyptian and Indian gods are in the other books.

E.R. Eddison: *The Worm Ouroborous.* Shows how the true Romantic Hero acts.

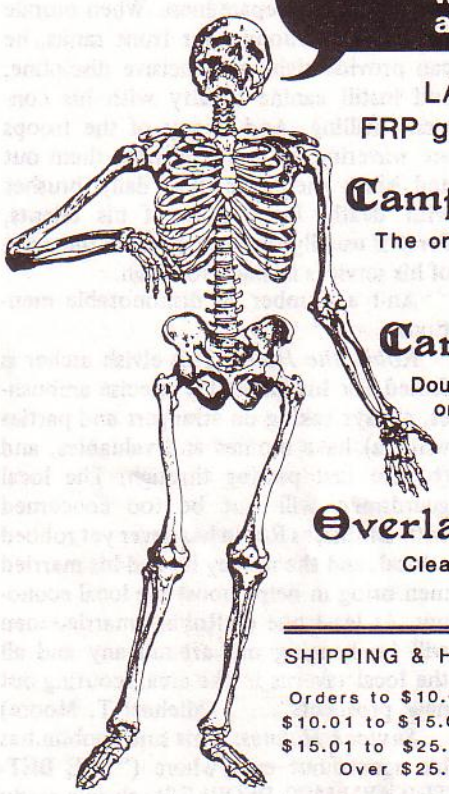
E.R. Burroughs: Barsoom (John Carter), Venus, Pellucidar series (c. 20 books). Excels at creating societies; no magic items, but some useful monsters are depicted.

Alan Burt Akers/Dray Prescott: Scorpio series (20 odd books and counting). A few monsters and many near-human species, each with its own "personality" characteristics and physical oddities. If you want a world not dominated by humans, adopt some of these "diffs."

John Norman: *Gor* series (14 books and counting). One new non-western, though non-magical, society is described at length in each book. The few useful monsters appear in the first few books, which are much better than the male chauvinism and masochism of the later books.

Finally, R.E. Howard *et al, Conan* series (umpteen books). The quintessence of barbarian swords and sorcery, often imitated but rarely equaled.

See also books by Fred Saberhagen, Karl Edward Wagner (Kane), Poul Anderson (*Broken Sword, Three Hearts and Three Lions*), Joy Chant, John Jakes, Jane Gaskell, Patricia McKillip, L.S. de Camp, Fletcher Pratt, Samuel Delaney, C.J. Cherryh, Andy Offut, Alan Garner, Lord Dunsany, Leigh Brackett (Eric John Stark), Katherine Kurtz, Stewart Lanier, Tanith Lee, and Ursula LeGuin. (I have given the most attention to the books from which I drew the most inspiration; I had to draw the line somewhere.)



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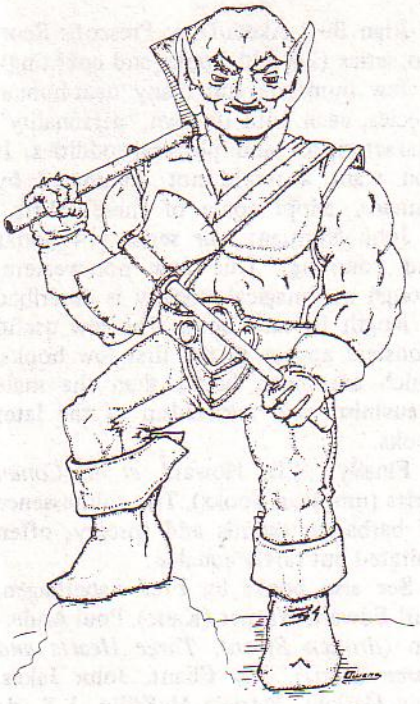

Character Contest Results

Our contest in Issue 32 was based on the article "Ten Characters I Wouldn't Let in My Universe." Readers were invited to submit characters they wouldn't let in *their* universes, with entries being judged on cleverness, inanity, and probable ability to throw a party into despair.

We got a lot of entries on this one. All of them were terrible; we were delighted. The winner, who will get 12 issues added to his TSG subscription for his pains, is Steven Winter. His entries:

A Half-orc Named Sue: Not a bad sort, as half-orcs go. He claims to be looking for his father, an orcish gambler and boozer who ran off when Sue was only 3 years old. He's an awesome fighter, and will travel with your party a while if you're going his way. He is a little sensitive about his name, though. If anybody or anything so much as snickers at it, Sue will go berserk and try to batter their brains out. He'll smash some furniture, too, just for effect.

McPherson "Starjack" Strut: A highly skilled starship engineer, McPherson can fix just about anything, including the odds. He's a compulsive gambler, and will constantly be betting with the crew. If, after a week in hyperspace, you haven't lost everything you own to him, it is because you didn't bet it. His favorite pastime, though, is playing Starjack for big money. If he gets out of your sight at a starport, he'll head for the nearest illegal Starjack game and promptly lose the title to your ship. You probably won't see him after that, but somebody is going to show up intending to collect a big debt.

Obi-Gon Kaworski: A member of the old and venerated Order of the Ne-Hi Knights, Obi-Gon just seems to have a flair for talking people into things. He will try to enlist your aid in some good and upright mission, but before long anyone working with him will realize he's just a senile old meddler with crazy ideas. He's also an extremely powerful telepath, however, and even after you leave him there's no telling when he'll pop into your head, distracting you from whatever you are doing to make stupid suggestions like "turn off your targeting computer" or "close your eyes and use your sword." Since he usually doesn't have anything better than this to do, he can be very persistent.

Second place (with six issues) goes to Ben Butterfield, who was guilty of:

H.P. Lorecraft: Though not physically strong, this renowned bard can be a real morale-booster on your next chthonian sortie. He claims to know about every monster since the beginning of time, and will entertain your party with descriptions of same down to the last detail (the last detail invariably being that it "was indescribably horrible").

Periodont, son of Orthodont: "Perry" is a very efficient leader; he can be relied upon to organize and instruct your troops to maximum preparedness. When morale is decaying among your front ranks, he can provide tight and incisive discipline, and instill canine loyalty with his constant drilling. And if any of the troops are wavering, he can straighten them out and brace them for their daily brushes with death. Despite all of his talents, Perry is usually shunned because the price of his services is much too high.

And a number of dishonorable mentions:

Robin the Hood: This elvish archer is famed for his incredibly precise ambushes, always taking on strangers and parties who (a) have monies and valuables, and (b) are just passing through. The local guardsmen will not be too concerned with all this, as Robin has never yet robbed a local, and the money he and his married men bring in helps boost the local economy. At least one of Robin's married men will be hanging out around any and all the local taverns in the area, scouting out new prospects . . . (Michael T. Moore)

Shylock Holmes: This small goblin has his agents out everywhere ("THE BETTER HOLMES PEOPLE"), always ready to lend out money to impoverished parties, limit $5,000 per individual, please. Easy terms, up to one (1) year to pay. People must, of course, agree to be "geased" so that they *do* come back at the end of the year, as Shylock does not even ask for collateral. Due to the unusually generous terms of the loan, the repayment will be the principal, doubled. (Weekly, of course, I thought *everybody* knew that. Here it is, right on the back of this parchment, these scorchmarks . . . What; you don't read High Fire-Elementese?) Anyone who dissents, or attempts to renege on his loan, will be harshly dealt with by Shylock's partner, the fire elemental, Watt-Sun. How? Elementary, of course. (Michael T. Moore)

Dr. What: You may be a bit put off by the good doctor's unorthodox appearance, but don't let the floppy hat and four-meter scarf fool you – he is a brilliant scientist. It is only after your ship is underway that you discover his one fault. He doesn't hear so well. Either –

a. By the time he finally gets whatever you're saying straight, it will be too late or

b. He'll hear something that's altogether different. ("Not razor! Laser!") (Kevin S. Cook)

Kung Fool: This priest of an obscure Chinese cult wanders about the countryside helping people (friendly or otherwise), whether they like it or not. He will force any characters he joins to help everyone in need, without reward. (He is unconcerned with material wealth.) Fond of making profoundly meaningless statements, he is often assaulted over misunderstandings. When attacked, he immediately enters a 3 to 5 minute flashback of his boyhood in China. If he survives his catatonic withdrawal (he is rather vulnerable), he will immediately disarm his opponents with a flurry of carefully choreographed slow-motion blows. He will then set them free, unharmed. Kung Fool is pursued by a band of fanatic assassins who will kill ruthlessly to capture him alive. He always manages to escape; you may not. (D. Edwin Holzer)

The Barbellian: Wielding his massive weight set, this immensely strong warrior is attired in a shining breast plate with "Gold's Gym" incised in runic letters upon its surface. When a party encounters the Barbellian, he will immediately attempt to whip them into shape. Charac-

ters with above average strength will find themselves doing curls, leg thrusts, and other mystic exercises. Weaker party members will be subjected to a series of push-ups, squat thrusts, and similar muscle-building activities. The Barbellian will not leave a party of adventurers until a) all characters are in excellent shape, or b) all characters die from exhaustion. (Richard Griffith)

The Incredible Bulk: This mild-mannered Elven research alchemist thought he had discovered an elixir of strength. Gulping it down, he was disappointed to find that it only made him hungry. Now, whenever his appetite is aroused, he is transformed into an immensely obese creature of awesome proportions. Bursting forth from a suit of used chainmail, this uncontrollably ravenous beast will proceed to devour everything within a three-mile radius. Unable to remember his fits of hunger, the Incredible Bulk spends most of the following hours wondering what happened to the surrounding forest. (Richard Griffith)

Grandlaff the Grey: Apparently a powerful wizard thinly disguised as an old man. After gathering a party of characters for a grand quest he turns out to be an old man thinly disguised as a wizard. His "magic" is flashy pyrotechnics. Very good at vanishing during sticky encounters, he returns when the danger is past to hog all the glory. (Ronald James)

Red Sonyuk: Female barbarian with flaming red hair. She will allow no man to possess her until he defeats her in combat. Ugly as sin, she constantly starts brawls and loses intentionally. (Ronald James)

Dr. Heckle/M.R. Hide: Usually found sitting despondently in a tavern of questionable repute. His genteel manners and elegant clothing will dissolve, if he is befriended, into a tale of woe. Once a brilliant physician, he is now doomed to constant transformations – into the seven foot, savage, obnoxious M.R. Hide. His tales of Hide's ferocity will awe a group. He seems like a great companion: at one stroke a skilled doctor and a berserk fighter!

Alas, your hopes will soon be shattered. From a position of safety in the rear, Dr. Heckle will (rudely) tell the party how to handle any situation they meet. And he won't transform in the face of danger!

Finally, though, M.R. Hide makes his appearance. He is, indeed, seven feet tall. He won't show up until the group is in an extremity of danger . . . and his last words, as he turns tail and runs, will be "Sorry, lads. I can't risk My Reverend Hide." (Robert Banderwoude)

Gimmy Carter: He tries peaceful negotiations while his comrades are being hacked to death. Gimmy will always escape. If any of his comrades survive, Gimmy will attempt a rescue mission, which will fail due to "bad luck." However, Gimmy can be useful. If your enemy is humane (or easily amused) Gimmy is a great one to send with the surrender terms. (Bob Del Giorno)

Gore-Geous George: A peroxide-blonde orc, George is the vainest monster around. His weapons, armor, and cloak are elegantly (but cheaply) adorned, and not one lock of his hair will be out of place. He will be accompanied by hireling goblins who carry his weapons and treasure, keep his cloak off the ground, and even open doors for him. George will touch nothing that has not been first sprayed by perfume. With all this, he is still a deadly fighter. The threat of dirt will only make him angrier. (Andrew Elovich)

Bo Cleric: This female priest has an incredibly high charisma and stunning good looks – which she uses to the fullest – and no brains at all. While with a group, she will cause great discontent by dropping double-entendre suggestions while remaining quite chaste. Worse, she strips to a G-string for battle, thus avoiding encumbrance and DX penalties. All human male combatants, unable to concentrate on the battle, will suffer a penalty when attempting to accomplish anything. If unflattering comments are made about her unusual hair style, she attacks immediately (bare hands against party members, weapons against anyone else) with a bonus to hit. (Lawrence Person)

Rommel McDommel: His nuclear-powered tank fell through a time-warp, and now he's back here with us barbarians. Rommel's tank ran out of ammo a long time ago, but that doesn't bother him. When he gets hungry he just revs it up and runs over an elk or an antelope or something. He says it's not bad . . . you even get to like ground elk after a while. In fact, he's thinking of opening a restaurant . . . (Draper Kauffman)

Billy Carter of Mars: Born on Earth but mysteriously transported to the Red Planet, he packs a beer-belly, lopsided eyeglasses, lots of teeth, and lots of space between the ears. Though the low Martian gravity gives him superhuman strength, one can expect little from him but talk and belching. (Larry Hall)

King Richard the Lizard-Hearted, Merv Gryphon, and *Joe Gargoylea:* The names (no descriptions) were submitted by Brad Reppen and Julie Aman. Just on the basis of the names, we knew we wouldn't let them into *our* universe!

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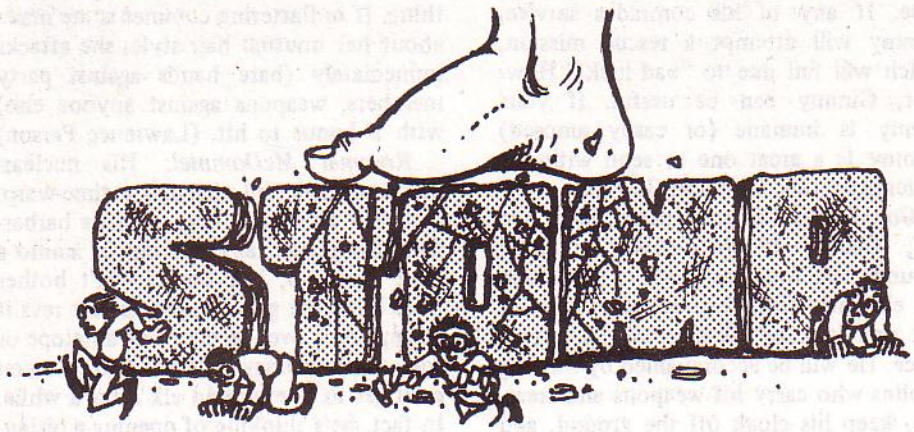

by John M. Morrison

Stomp is one of the better small wargames on the market. Not only is it fast-playing, but it's easy to grasp. (Eighteen counters represents the upper limit of my tactical skill.) In fact, it's so straightforward that it would seem that variants would not only be superfluous but quite beside the point of the game. Naturally, I started designing them immediately after I purchased it.

After all, "to modify" is the root verb of all wargaming. We are, as a breed, not satisfied with the status quo; half our free time is spent in either snipping rules out to make a game more "playable" or shoveling them in to make it more "realistic." In fact, so universal is this compulsion that the wargame publishing companies have been able to save millions by releasing unplaytested games, giving hours of fun as gamers attempt to balance the thing out and then explain their arcane notations to others. The latter creates arguments, which (in the final analysis) is what gaming is all about.

Unfortunately, the Chaosium did not have this goal in mind with *Stomp*. But I do. The first "extra rule" is the **Basketball Option.** At any time after the sixth hour of play, one player may grab a nearby basketball (dogs, chairs, or boxed games also usable) and throw it on the board. His opponent then picks up the pieces and may whale the tar out of the "tossing" player once for each piece that disappears down the heating duct.

Stomp 1999: The elves marked "3" have lasers. In any turn, instead of movement, these elves may attempt to fuse the giant's sandals to the ground. This is resolved exactly as a spear attack, but the laser-elves need not be adjacent to the sandal, although they must have line-of-sight on the target. It is blocked by trees or another elf unit. An elf may, however, fire *out of* a tree hex. Only the slow-moving elves are trained to use energy weapons; if they are eliminated, no more ranged attacks. They need two turns to ready their weapons – thus they may not attack on the first or second turns.

To offset this, the giant's club is actually a plasma cannon. It may be used as either; as a cannon, it turns one hex into a "clear" no matter what was in it (lake, trees, elves, or marsh). This may be used 3 times per game (more for less experienced players – adjust for balance), on the second segment of the turn (instead of swinging). The club remains off the board for that turn. It may be used as a club at any time, but the delicate mechanisms are broken and it's just a club.

Stomplomacy: At any time during the game, the giant may stop and start discussing the special problems that giantism entails, problems the diminutive elves may not be aware of. During this time, the elves may put down their silly little spears and gather around Thunderpumper to discuss their side of the situation. If the giant takes advantage of this opportunity to squish four at one blow, it will be considered a darn shame.

Optional rules for high school lunch break play: Hey, what's this? Another one of them games with the funny dice? "No, it's . . ." Look! This looks like a foot! "Hey, don't throw it, I only have one . . ." And these little guys! "Those are elves. Put them back." Elves? Like Santa Claus? Yeah! Take this one to the North Pole. "Aw, get it out of the ice cream machine, will ya?" What's it called? Stomp? Here ya go! STOMP, crash, tinkle, clang.

World War II Prison Camp variant: The "5" movement elves are actually dwarves, armed with picks. They cannot use magic stakes, but they *can* dig. It takes 7 turns less the number working to put a tunnel entrance into a hex. After than only one figure is allowed in the tunnel at a time; it may be extended in 3 turns. Dwarves may start digging on the 2nd turn. An underground figure may be stomped but not clubbed; all stomped tunnel hexes are restored to their previous status. For purposes of tunneling, a wall section counts as two hexes, and must be tackled from underground. From then on, one figure at a time may occupy the tunnel, moving its allowance or less (wall sections, again, count as 2). The elves win if 6 or more of them get out. It seems slanted in favour of the elves but it's hard to get a tunnel sunk. (Try combining this with the "1999" variant! I dare you!)

The Giant that Ate Sheboygan: Thunderpumper has grown for this one. He has an attack strength of 12 and a defense of 3 for each foot half. His movement is 2 squares per foot; halves of the same foot must be in adjacent squares and may not go into a building. Movement costs for the giant otherwise is 1 per square. The toppling rules remain the same for awkward foot positioning. He may "straddle" one or two squares of buildings (i.e., his feet may be separated by a row of buildings, either high or low). The giant may take no special powers except those inherent within him. His ankles block line-of-sight.

Thunderpumper's club is a weapon with Building Destruct power of 8 and an attack strength of 4. It may make a range attack up to 2 squares from a foot section. It may also club helicopters, as the giant (obviously) has Great Height. After the club's attack, it is left on the board in the position of its attack. It does not block line-of-sight, and may not be destroyed.

TP's main attack comes during movement. He must specify how big a "stomp" each foot half is performing (in other words, how much attack strength is going into the attack in that particular area). If he specifies "zero," or the attack fails, the unit(s) underfoot must retreat one square. An unsuccessful club-swing has the same effect.

The human gets 24 points to start. He also gets the 12 elves and both ropes, together with all populace units. Elves have a movement as printed on their counters, and an attack/defense of 7 minus their movement. Elves must expend all their movement to enter a building, and must start adjacent to a populace unit.

Once a foot half is reduced to 0, it is assumed to be "pinned." At the end of his turn, the giant may restore 1 defense point to one pinned section, thusly unpinning it. If all sections are pinned, and the elves meet the "Lassoing the Giant"

requirements, an attempt may be made to topple Thundie. This is the victory condition for the humans. Victory for the giant consists of either 40 points or figuring out how he got there in the first place.

Stomp in the Pacific: The elves drown on the first turn, the giant on the second. The game then proceeds under normal *Victory in the Pacific* rules.

Cosmic Encounters of the Worst Kind: This was an especially hard one to work out. However, it is every bit as unplayable as it is hard to set up. The giant and the elves set up on different systems. All 21 elves are used; the giant has 40 counters (two colour sets). In addition, the giant's (unpinned) feet are placed on any two separate planets on his home system, and the club is placed on another home-system planet. Victory conditions are different – the elf must topple the giant, while the giant must establish three bases on the elf's system while maintaining four more of his own planets.

Each player draws a 7-card hand, and the elf goes first. He may withdraw one of his counters from warp (if there are any there), then he may attack. This is done in the normal CE fashion with one difference: elves count as their "movement" in tokens while the giant's count as only one apiece. (For purposes of collection consolation, though, elves count as 1 token apiece.) After attacking he may attempt to pin feet, if his tokens are on the same world as a foot. This is done in the normal *Stomp* fashion; the elf may allocate any number of his units (which, again, must be on the same planet as the foot under attack) to the task, on either half of the foot.

On the giant's turn, he may *either* unpin one foot half, or retrieve as many tokens from warp as the "movement" of the most recently retrieved elf. In attack, he may first send one to four elf tokens to warp (each unpinned foot half on the same planet as elves may stomp one), then he may move one (unpinned) foot to the planet on either side of it, then he gets his conventional attack which is resolved as under CE rules and may be on either the elves' system or an elf base on his own planets.

If a deal is called for but not made, 12 points of elves (or more, if not possible to get exactly 12) and 12 giant tokens are taken to warp. Feet never go to warp.

The club may be placed on any planet right after the giant's turn is over. If on a planet with two or more elf units, one of them must move to another elf base. If used against a planet with only one elf, it has no effect.

Toppling: A rope must be on *both* of the feet planets. a two-finger resolution then takes place.

For greater complexity, alien powers may be drawn. You may wish to draw little spacesuits on the elves.

Stomp meets the only OFFICIAL fantasy wargame ©: Thunderpumper has 9+3 hit dice. Each player takes a number of elves so as to total 18. All characteristics are rolled up in accordance with restrictions on elf requisites. To stake a foot, the "to hit" roll must be made (a magic usquebaugh spear, +1/+2 vs. larger than elf-sized feet, counts as a "thrust spear"). For toppling, at least one elf who can pull must make his "open doors" roll. Once this is achieved, they can go to Lord Darn's castle, where they will find that the Lord has died of bad dice rolls and has left them one of everything in the DMs guide. Wandering monsters may be thrown in.

Contest

One of our readers once wrote that "if there are N games on the market, there are N(N-1)/2 possible variants made by combining them, and I don't want to read about ANY of them." Now, if anything, his math was conservative; that formula only allows for combinations of two games. What about three? Four? Aieeeee!

This month's contest: follow the noble example of the article above and think of a really *peculiar* variant involving at least two games. You don't have to stop at two. What about using a *Snit's Revenge* board and *Snapshot* rules to play a game in which the board represents the inside of an Ogre? The Snits are invading infantrymen; the thingies in the Bolotomus are defense robots. You play the game in tandem with an ongoing game of *Ogre*. The snit-troopers win if they can destroy the Ogrelotomus before (on the other board) it gets to the CP and destroys it.

Entries will be rated in ingenuity, weirdness, humor, and playability. They don't *have* to be playable – but it helps.

All entries become the property of TSG. First-place winner will receive a 12-issue subscription; runner-up will get 6 issues. Their entries, and any especially good honorable mentions, will appear in TSG. We reserve the right to award no prizes if no entries of publishable quality are received. Entries must be postmarked no later than January 30, 1981.

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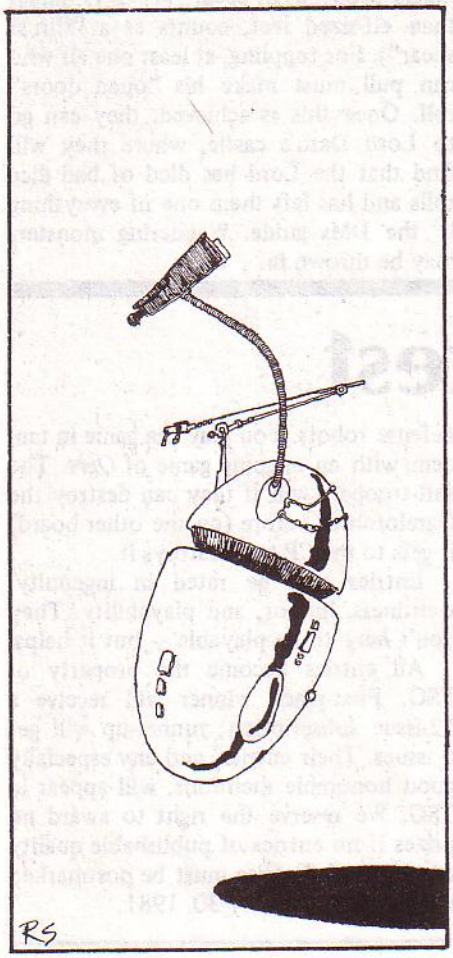

Deus Ex Machina

by Bruce Webster

Attention, all you budding entrepreneurs out there! Yes, you, you with the $2500+ computer system (and payments to match) who are looking for a way to make that hunk of silicon and plastic pay for itself. Here's a suggestion (free, no less!) which may help you along towards that goal and at the same time help aid in the genesis of hobbyist networks. If you're interested, or even just curious, read on; the rest of you can turn the page.

As we all know (from a few issues back) there are an ever-growing number of play-by-mail games around the country, most of which use computers to help keep track of everything. The problem with setting up such games is the large amount of data entry (for moves) and printouts (for current status) that each game requires, not to mention postage, late moves, etc. In this column, I would like to discuss an alternative: play-by-*phone* games that should bypass a lot of that hassle. First I'll give a description of what I mean, then cover the basic setup needed (both hardware and soft-), and then discuss some of the problems that will probably crop up. After that, you're on your own.

Description

To illustrate how a play-by-phone game might be set up and played, let's use a hypothetical gamer (named Forrest) who happens to own a personal computer, and a hypothetical game (named *Empire*). Forrest has sent for and read the rules for *Empire* and decides to give it a try. He sends in an information sheet and money for setup and his first 20 moves. A few weeks later, he receives materials describing his initial condition and resources (he's "Emperor of the Dog-Leg Nebula"). The materials also give him his player password and game schedule. His game is to start on Monday, 1 February. Each game turn will last two days, and there will be two game turns a week: one during Monday and Tuesday, the other during Thursday and Friday. He can call any time during those two days and can call as many times as he wants without additional charge. Furthermore, if he doesn't call at all during a given game turn, he is not charged for that turn.

The big day (1 February, remember?) arrives. Forrest, using his personal computer and a modem (*mo*dulator-*dem*odulator – used for phone-link communications between computers) to form an "intelligent" terminal, calls up the *Empire* game computer. He is requested to enter in his name and player password, and does so. Having satisfied the computer that he is indeed who he says he is, Forrest can now perform the three basic functions. First, he can display his status as of the last game turn; right now, however, that would be just the same as the information he received in the mail, so he passes. Second, he can send and read "mail," i.e., messages to and from other players. He is surprised to find a message already waiting for him and reads it; it is from the "People's Committee of the Ermin Federation" and contains a subtle suggestion that they join forces to attack a third player. Forrest sends a noncommittal reply and moves on. He now faces his third option, which is to enter in his move or modify a move entered earlier in the game turn. He does so, using the command syntax described in the rules book. He then chooses the "EXIT" option, and the *Empire* game computer logs him off and hangs up the phone. Forrest decides to get up early Thursday morning to see how his move went . . .

A scenario like this is possible right now, and I wouldn't be surprised if games like this were already in existence (though I have yet to hear of any). But I think the advantages for both moderator and player are apparent. For the moderator, there is less time and expense involved. The only mailings are for rules, initial information, and passwords – and the first two could also be done on the computer. Printouts are minimal (probably just for moderator use) and the only data entry is for accounting purposes (as payments received) and for game setups. For the player there are advantages as well. First is the speedy turnaround: instead of two weeks (or longer) between moves, each game turn could last as little as 24 hours. Cost per turn would probably be less, since the player would absorb the communications cost in his monthly phone bill. And communications between players would be easier (and subject to game factors!).

Basic Setup

Perhaps the nicest part of this scheme is that it doesn't require a large amount of capital (relatively speaking) to get it going. On the other hand, it will be neither cheap nor easy . . . but those of you with any entrepreneural experience will already know that. Here's a rough estimate of what you will need to get it going.

Hardware

One of the more attractive aspects of this idea (for me, anyway) is that it can be developed on a well-equipped personal computer. The minimum system needed would probably consist of the following:

– Computer: a mini- or microcomputer, preferably (though not necessarily) one with hardware and soft-

ware to allow multi-tasking (multiple jobs running simultaneously);
- Memory: depends on the system, but 48K of RAM would probably be the lower limit, and 64K would be nicer;
- Mass storage: at least two floppy disk drives or a hard disk with a backup medium (floppy or tape drive);
- Modem: a "smart" modem, with automatic answer would be a must (one for each phone line coming in);
- Printer: doesn't have to be fancy, since it would be for in-house use mostly (accounting and software development);
- Phone: one or more business phone lines (depends on whether or not your computer can handle several users simultaneously).

Now, a 48K microcomputer with two floppy disk drives and a small printer isn't an uncommon system, and a "smart" modem usually costs less than $400, so this shouldn't be a hard configuration to come up with. The hard part is what follows: software development.

Software

This will be the trickiest part of the system since the software has to be both correct and consistent. It has to be well-thought out, well-designed, and well-written. And if it is not done well done, you will not succeed. Because of this, I would strongly advise *against* using Basic, a language which is fine for quick and simple programming, but is lousy for serious development. Since there are so many languages now available on micros (Pascal, PL/1, Forth, Fortran, Lisp, *et cetera*), there isn't much reason to stay with Basic.

The best design technique would probably be a modular one, with each module performing a specific task. Some of the modules needed (aside from the game itself) might be:
- User interface routine. This would require the user to give his or her name and password, and would check them against the existing files for verification. It would also display the user's options and accept commands.
- Mailbox routine. This would allow player-player and player-moderator communications by storing messages in files that players can read (and then delete) when they sign on to the computer.
- Move input routine. This would allow creation and editing of a file containing the player's move commands.
- Move processing routine. This would accept as input all of the move files created during the most recent game turn and would update the game accordingly. This could either be completely automatic (i.e., a computer-moderated game) or could be interactive to allow a person to help moderate the game.
- Status generation routine. This would produce a status file for each player to show the results of the last move. It could also be interactive.
- Accounting routine. This would keep track of each player's account, subtracting money when a player has moved during a given game turn and crediting him or her when more money is sent in.

This list is by no means complete or even the best way to do it; that will depend on just how you set your system up. But I do suggest that the program be well-designed; a few extra weeks or months on design and development will save you countless headaches later.

Potential Problems

There are some specific areas where you will want to be extra sure that nothing will (or has) gone wrong. Let me suggest a few. First, security. As anyone who has had to run a public-access system can tell you, this can be a real headache, especially dealing with computer "freaks" who see a security system as a challenge and who try their best to get in where they don't belong. Your salvation here is that you do *not* have to write a general-purpose operating system for public use; you just have to write a single program which is the *only* thing that someone accessing the computer via the modem can run. Your only problem then is someone using someone else's password, having guessed or stolen it. Some possible solutions here are long passwords (harder to guess), multiple entries (player has to enter name *and* ID number *and* password(s)), allowing player to change his/her password (though this could backfire), and having the password change each day or game turn according to a formula known only to the player. Ultimately, though, the player has to be responsible for protecting his account also; if he insists on telling others his password or letting them see it, he's going to have to expect problems.

Another problem is your phone line. Do *not* try to use the same phone for voice communications, simply because no matter what you print about which hours people should (and shouldn't) call for the computer, you will still get calls all hours of the day and night. So resign yourself to having one or more phone lines dedicated to the computer and use a separate one for any regular communications.

A third problem will be deciding what to charge for all this. The cost per turn should be substantially lower, since (1) your overhead (postage, data entry, and printouts, etc.) is lower, and (2) your game turns are (probably) more frequent (who can afford $1.50/game turn if there are 20 game turns/month?). Also, any players who have to call long distance will have an added charge to their play time. I leave this solution completely up to you.

Conclusion

Having proposed all this, I would like to get feedback from those of you who have also considered this or actually tried it (here's a shot at some free advertising). You can write me directly at:

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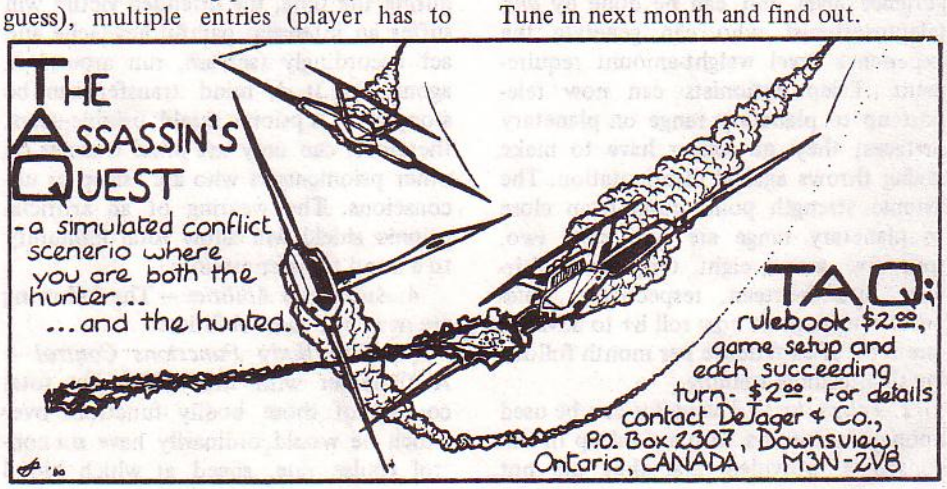
Houston, TX 77058.

I'm not sure what's in store for next month (I seldom am until I sit down to write these things), but I may finally pursue a topic I mentioned in my very first column: the computer as "familiar." Tune in next month and find out.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More Psionics for *TRAVELLER*

by Kenneth Burke

Since its debut, *Traveller* has experienced tremendous growth – the number of rulebooks has gone up from three to five, numerous supplements and adventures have been written for it, several *Traveller*-oriented games have been printed. Now there's even an award-winning *Traveller* magazine in print. The future is bound to see more *Traveller* materials; hopefully, a rulebook or supplement will be printed on psionics. Until that time, the following variant can be used in conjunction with the standard psionic rules of *Traveller.*

1. *Teleportation* – Teleportationists now leave training with an experience level of *one.* A teleportationist may now teleport ten kilograms of weight times their present teleportation experience level. A teleportationist expends no extra psionic strength points when teleporting the weight, he simply teleports it. This is done by touching or being touched by the weight amounts and teleporting along with the weight amounts to the intended areas where they are to arrive.

Teleportationists cannot teleport heavier weight amounts than those allowed by their skill levels; they must include their own body weight when determining the weight amounts they can teleport, thus preventing any successful personal teleportation attempt until the teleportationist reaches experience levels seven to nine. (Roll 1d6/2.) Small characters and children can usually start teleporting themselves around level four or five.

Personal teleportation with clothing, weapons, and the like is no longer limited to teleportationists with a certain experience level, but can be done by *any* teleportationist who can generate the experience level weight-amount requirement. Teleportationists can now teleport up to planetary range on planetary surfaces; they no longer have to make saving throws against disorientation. The psionic strength point costs from close to planetary range are now one, two, four, five, seven, eight, ten, eleven, thirteen, and fourteen, respectively. Teleportationists must now roll 8+ to advance one level of experience per month following their psionic training.

2. *Telepathy* – Telepathy can be used upon psionic-users who are asleep or unconscious, provided that they are not wearing an artificial psionic shield. Psionic-users who impose suspended animation upon themselves via awareness are *not* vulnerable to telepathic abilities; those who have suspended animation imposed on them via other means, though, are.

3. *Mind Transfer* – Mind transfer is a telepathic ability; it requires an experience level of fourteen (see TSG 20), plus the expenditure of fourteen psionic strength points to perform in addition to any psionic strength point cost due to range. The psionic strength points used to conduct the mind transfer are not replenished until the mind transfer is complete.

The mind transfer ability lets a psionic-user transfer his mind from his own body to that of another, taking total control of the body from the mind that originally controlled it. The psionic-user's old body goes into immediate coma; each day it is left unoccupied it suffers four points of damage. Upon loss of a third or more of its combined S, D, and E total, the mind instinctively returns to its old body at a speed of a hundred kilometers per second. Should the body be destroyed, the mind dies. When a transferred mind leaves the body it occupied, the formerly occupied body will go into an immediate coma; in two to seven hours, the mind that originally controlled the body will regain control of the body and it will awaken.

When in another body, the mind-transferring psionic-user can use his psionic powers, the mind transfer included. It takes approximately eleven seconds for a successful mind transfer to take place; during the time, the intended victim will suffer an intensely painful headache and act accordingly (scream, run around in agony, etc.). A mind transfer can be stopped by a psionic shield; psionic-users, therefore, can only use mind transfer on other psionic-users who are asleep or unconscious. The wearing of an artificial psionic shield will allow total immunity to a mind transfer attempt.

4. *Awareness Abilities* – The following are new awareness abilities:

(a) *Full Body Functions Control* – A character with this ability has total control of those bodily functions over which he would ordinarily have no control (pulse rate, speed at which blood flows, breathing, etc.). The character can increase or decrease these at will. Such a character can survive in any atmosphere type except "no atmosphere," "corrosive," and "insidious" without having to use protective measures; when underwater, he is treated as if wearing artificial gills. It takes a character five seconds to use the ability of full bodily functions control; the ability lasts five minutes times the character's present awareness experience level.

(b) *Full Inner Strength Potential* – A character with this ability has total control over his inner strength ("chi," "ki," the "force"); this allows him full use of his body potential, giving him abnormal abilities. His S, D, and E scores are doubled; the character can now perform any feat twice as fast as he could with normal strength and speed. In combat, characters using the ability will not lose consciousness should one or two of their melee characteristics be reduced to zero; they will remain awake and active until (a) they are through using the ability, or (b) they die. When a character stops using the ability, any wounds he received in combat while using it are reduced accordingly, normal melee affects now applying. It takes ten seconds for a character to use the ability of full inner strength potential; it lasts ten minutes times the character's present awareness experience level.

(c) *Astral Projection* – A character with this ability can separate his inner being (soul) from his body and project it to any part of the planet, starship, or wherever he is at the moment. Since the soul is not composed of three-dimensional substances, it cannot be blocked by three-dimensional objects or obstacles. A character's soul, therefore, can never physically affect the world around it; by using psionic powers in conjunction with his astral projection ability, though, a character can mentally affect the world around his soul. A character may project his inner being indefinitely. If the character's body is wounded (suffers an S, D, or E point loss), though, the character's soul will return to his body at a speed of one hundred kilometers per second, the maximum speed a character's soul can travel. A character's projected being can be detected by psionic telepathic abilities or electronic ones, such as an infrared scanner; it is never visible to the naked eye. Astral projection is a level fifteen ability (obtainable only by using the earlier psionic variant) and costs fifteen psionic strength points to perform; these points are not replenished until such time as a character stops projecting his inner being.

1980 Game Survey

Greetings, and welcome to *The Space Gamer*'s fourth annual SF/Fantasy Game Survey. Once again, you get to cheer your favorites and shoot down the turkeys. Results will probably appear in TSG number 38.

Not all games published can be included in this survey; many marginally distributed or low-rated games have been omitted. The proliferation of role-playing game supplements forces us to include a representative few, rather than the whole batch.

Only one rating is requested for each game: an OVERALL evaluation. Ask yourself how happy you were with the WHOLE GAME – clarity, playability, design quality, graphics, components, and fun. Rate games on a scale of 1 to 9, with 1 being the LOWEST and 9 being the HIGHEST. In-between numbers would represent in-between feelings, with 5 being the rating for a game you neither liked nor disliked, but felt was only a fair, average effort.

We have also asked you to rate game companies, game magazines, and TYPES of games.

PLEASE rate ONLY those games which you have actually played, magazines which you have actually read, companies with which you have dealt, etc. Rating the ones you don't know about will only confuse the issue.

If you have NEVER EVEN HEARD OF a game, do not give it a numerical rating – give it an "X." If you know of a game but have never played it, just leave the space blank. "X" represents a game, magazine, or company you never heard of at all!

Our thanks go to the publishers who responded to our pre-survey questionnaire, and to King's Hobbies, of Austin, for their help in filling in question marks for those that didn't respond.

PUBLISHERS

-- ARG – Argon Games
-- AUS – Automated Simulations, Inc.
-- AVH – Avalon Hill (aka Microcomputer Games, Inc.)
-- BAR – Baron Publishing
-- B5S – Big Five Software
-- BGC – Balboa Game Company
-- BTC – BTC Products
-- CAL – California Pacific
-- CCS – Creative Computing Software
-- CHM – The Chaosium
-- CIA – Conflict Interaction Associates
-- CLE – Clemens and Associates
-- CTS – C-T Simulations
-- CWW – Creative Wargames Workshop
-- DAY – Daystar West Media Productions
-- DEJ – De Jager & Co.
-- DGC – Detroit Gaming Center
-- DIS – Discovery Games
-- DM6 – Dimension Six
-- EDU – Edu-Ware Services, Inc.
-- EGS – Emprise Game Systems
-- EON – Eon Products
-- EXC – Excalibre Games
-- FAE – Fantasy Art Enterprises
-- FAP – Family Pastimes
-- FBI – Flying Buffalo, Inc.
-- FFG – Future & Fantasy Games
-- FGS – Fantasy Games Software
-- FGU – Fantasy Games Unlimited
-- FPI – Fantasy Productions, Inc. (aka Twinn-K, Inc.)
-- GAL – Gamelords, Ltd.
-- GAT – Game Technology
-- GAW – Games Workshop
-- GDW – Game Designers' Workshop
-- GMS – Gameshop
-- GPA – Gamesmasters Publishers Association
-- GRI – Grimore Games
-- GR1 – Group One
-- GRP – Game Room Productions, Ltd.
-- GWL – Games Workshop, Ltd.
-- HER – Heritage USA, Inc.
-- ICE – Iron Crown Enterprises
-- INF – Infinity Co.
-- IGA – International Gamers Association
-- INS – Instant Software
-- ITG – International Team Games
-- JUG – Judges Guild
-- MCT – McAllister and Trampier
-- MDK – Midkemia Press
-- MET – Metagaming
-- MIS – The Mishler Co.
-- MPC – Morningstar Publishing Co.
-- MUS – Muse Software
-- NIM – Nimrod Game Development, Ltd.
-- PER – Personal Software
-- PHO – Phoenix Games
-- PII – Programma International, Inc.
-- POW – Powersoft, Inc.
-- QUA – Quality Software
-- RAP – Ral Partha Enterprises, Inc.
-- RCI – Rainbow Computing, Inc.
-- RWG – R. Warfield Game Design
-- SCA – Simulations Canada
-- SCH – Schubel & Son
-- SIM – Simulation Software
-- SJG – Steve Jackson Games
-- SPI – Simulations Publications, Inc.
-- STG – Stratagems
-- STS – Strategic Simulations, Inc.
-- SUM – Superior Models
-- SYN – Synergistic Solar, Inc.
-- TFG – Task Force Games
-- TGM – The Gamemaster
-- TSE – The Software Exchange
-- TSF – The Software Factory
-- TSR – TSR Hobbies
-- TYR – Tyr Gamemakers, Ltd.
-- UDM – Uncontrollable Dungeon Master
-- WCG – West Coast Games
-- WOC – World Campaigns
-- YAQ – Yaquinto Publishing, Inc.
-- ZOC – Zocchi Distributors (aka Gamescience)

MAGAZINES

-- Ares (SPI, $3)
-- Different Worlds (CHM, $2.25)
-- The Dungeoneer/Judge's Guild Journal (JUG, $2.80)
-- The Dragon (TSR, $3)
-- Flying Buffalo Quarterly (FBI, $1.50)
-- The General (AVH, $2.50)
-- The Gryphon (BAR, $2.75)
-- The Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society (GDW, $2)
-- Sorcerer's Apprentice (FBI, $2.25)
-- The Space Gamer (SJG, $2)
-- White Dwarf (GAW, $2.50)

GAME TYPES

-- Space Games
-- SF Tactical Games
-- SF Strategic Games
-- SF Board Games
-- SF Role-Playing Games
-- SF Role-Playing Supplements
-- Fantasy Tactical Games
-- Fantasy Strategic Games
-- Fantasy Board Games
-- Fantasy Role-Playing Games
-- Fantasy Role-Playing Supplements
-- Space Miniatures Games
-- SF Tactical Miniatures Games
-- Fantasy Miniatures Games
-- Computer Space Games
-- Computer Adventure Games
-- Computer Wargames
-- PBM Games
-- Card Games
-- Historical Games
-- "Micro"-sized Games
-- Moderate-sized Games
-- "Monster" Games

Games to be rated are listed below by categories. After each game are noted its publisher (see the abbreviations above), physical component type, and price. Unknowns are represented by a question mark.

SPACE GAMES

-- BattleFleet: Mars (SPI, box, $15)
-- Belter (GDW, box, $11.98)
-- Dark Nebula (GDW, box, $5.98)
-- Dark Stars (SCA, bag, $11.99)
-- Double Star (GDW, box, $9.98)
-- Godsfire (MET, box, $15.95)
-- Hyper Battle (FFG, bag, $2.95)
-- Imperium (GDW, box, $9.98)
-- Kroll & Prumni (ITG, box, $39.95)
-- Nebula 19 (MIS, bag, $11)
-- Outreach (SPI, box, $12)
-- Second Empire (DM6, box, $13.95)
-- Shooting Stars (YAQ, box, $16)
-- Starfall (YAQ, box, $13)
-- Starfire (TFG, bag, $3.95)
-- Star Fleet Battles (TFG, box, $14.95)
-- Starforce (SPI, box, $12)
-- Stellar Conquest (MET, box, $12.95)
-- Timelag (GMS, bag, $3.95)
-- Vector 3 (SPI, bag, $3.95)
-- Warp War (MET, box, $3.95)
-- Worldkiller (SPI, box, $5.95)

SF TACTICAL GAMES

-- Artifact (MET, box, $3.95)
-- Asteroid (GDW, box, $5.98)
-- The Awful Green Things from Outer Space (TSR, box, $8)
-- Azhanti High Lightning (GDW, box, $21.98)
-- The Creature that Ate Sheboygan (SPI, box, $5.95)
-- Dimension Demons (MET, box, $3.95)
-- G.E.V. (MET, box, $3.95)
-- Hot Spot (MET, box, $3.95)
-- Ice War (MET, box, $3.95)
-- Intruder (TFG, bag, $3.95)
-- Kung Fu 2100 (SJG, bag, $3)
-- Marine: 2002 (YAQ, box, $17)
-- Ogre (MET, box, $3.95)
-- Robots! (TFG, bag, $3.95)
-- Snapshot (GDW, box, $7.98)
-- Space Warrior (ARG, bag, $3.95)
-- Starship Troopers (AVH, box, $15)
-- Star Soldier (SPI, box, $12)
-- Time Tripper (SPI, box, $5.95)
-- Titan Strike (SPI, bag, $3.95)
-- War in the Ice (SPI, box, $12)
-- The Wreck of the BSM Pandora (SPI, box, $5.95)

SF STRATEGIC GAMES

-- Bloodtree Rebellion (GDW, box, $12.98)
-- Freedom In the Galaxy (SPI, box, $19.95)
-- Invasion of the Air Eaters (MET, box, $3.95)
-- The War of the Worlds (TFG, box, $9.95)

SF BOARD GAMES

-- Cosmic Encounter (EON, box, $12)
-- Doctor Who (GWL, box, $20)
-- Dune (AVH, box, $15)
-- Earth Game (FAP, box, $7.95)
-- 4th Dimension (TSR, box, $10)
-- Quirks (EON, box, $12)
-- Space Future (FAP, box, $7.80)

SF ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

-- Gamma World (TSR, box, $10)
-- John Carter (SPI, box, $19.95)
-- Space Opera (FGU, box, $18)
-- Space Patrol (ZOC, bag, $7)
-- Space Quest (TYR, $9)
-- Starships & Spacemen (FGU, $7)
-- Superhero 2044 (ZOC, bag, $7)
-- Traveller (GDW, box, $11.98)
-- Villains & Vigilantes (FGU, $6)

SF ROLE-PLAYING SUPPLEMENTS

-- Bright Face/Mithril (GDW, $4.98)
-- Dra'k'ne Station (JUG, $4.95)
-- Encounters in the Phoenix Quadrant (GR1, $3)
-- The Evening Star (RWG, $5.50)
-- High Guard (GDW, $5.98)
-- Ley Sector (JUG, $4.98)
-- Mercenary (GDW, $5.98)
-- Pen-Latol's World (GR1, bag, $7.95)
-- Research Station Gamma (GDW, $4.98)
-- Sector 57 (DGC, $5)
-- 76 Patrons (GDW, $3.98)
-- Shadows/Annic Nova (GDW, $4.98)
-- Spacefarer's Guide to Alien Monsters (PHO, $8)
-- Tancred (JUG, $5.98)
-- Twilight's Peak (GDW, $4.98)

FANTASY TACTICAL GAMES

-- Arms Law (ICE, $7.50)
-- Duel Arcane (GAL, bag, $3.95)
-- Hero (YAQ, album, $7)
-- King of the Mountain (DM6, box, $15)
-- Melee (MET, box, $3.95)
-- Stomp (CHM, bag, $2.95)
-- Swashbuckler (YAQ, album, $7)
-- Valkenburg Castle (TFG, bag, $3.95)
-- Warlock (GWL, box, $20)
-- Wizard (MET, box, $3.95)
-- Wohrom (ITG, box, $49.95)

FANTASY STRATEGIC GAMES

-- Barbarian Kings (SPI, box, $5.95)
-- The Beastlord (YAQ, box, $15)
-- Demons (SPI, box, $5.95)
-- Divine Right (TSR, box, $10)
-- The Dragon Lords (FGU, bag, $15)
-- Lords & Wizards (FGU, bag, $15)
-- Idro (ITG, box, $49.95)
-- Knights & Knaves (NIM, box, $10)
-- Lords of the Middle Sea (CHM, bag, $9.95)
-- Spellbinder (TFG, bag, $3.95)
-- Swords & Sorcery (SPI, box, $18)
-- Valley of the Four Winds (GWL, box, $20)
-- War of the Ring (SPI, box, $18)
-- Zargo's Lords (ITG, box, $39.95)

FANTASY BOARD GAMES

-- Darkover (EON, box, $12)
-- Death and Destruction (UDM, box, $8.95)
-- Dungeon! (TSR, box, $10)
-- Fantastic Encounters (WCG, bag, $4.95)
-- The Hammer of Thor (GMS, box, $18.95)
-- Junta (CWW, box, $9.95)
-- Magic Realm (AVH, box, $15)
-- Mythology (YAQ, box, $14)
-- Titan (MCT, box, $20)
-- Wizard's Quest (AVH, box, $15)

FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

-- Advanced Dungeons & Dragons (TSR, $12-$15/vol.)
-- Adventures in Fantasy (EXC, box, $25)
-- Arduin Grimoire (GRI, $9.50/vol.)
-- Bushido (PHO, bag, $10)
-- Chivalry & Sorcery (FGU, $10)
-- The Complete Warlock (BGC, $6)
-- DeathMaze (SPI, box, $5.95)
-- DragonQuest (SPI, box, $9.95)
-- Dungeons & Dragons – original (TSR, box, $12)
-- The Fantasy Trip (MET, $4.95/vol.)
-- High Fantasy (FPI, bag, $6.95)
-- Infinity (INF, $6.95)
-- Land of the Rising Sun (FGU, box, $18)
-- Monsters! Monsters! (FBI, $4.95)
-- Odysseus (FGU, $5.50)
-- RuneQuest (CHM, $11.95)
-- Thieves' Guild (GAL, bag, $9.95)
-- Tunnels & Trolls (FBI, $8.95)

FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING SUPPLEMENTS

-- Abyss (FBI, $1.99)
-- Arden (FGU, $8.50)
-- All the World's Monsters (CHM, $10/vol.)
-- Arena of Khazan (FBI, $4.95)
-- Book of Treasure Maps (JUG, $3.95)
-- Broken Tree Inn (JUG, $4)
-- C&S Sourcebook (FGU, $8.50)
-- Circle of Ice (FBI, $1.99)
-- Cities (MDK, $6.95)
-- The City of Carse (MDK, $8.95)
-- City of Terrors (FBI, $7)
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Featured Review:

The War of the Worlds

by Tony Watson

H.G. Wells' turn-of-the-century story, *The War of the Worlds*, is one of science fiction's most famous works. The situation, in which tentacled invaders from Mars attempted to subdue Earth with their superior weaponry, has been emulated many times. Although the book is about war, it deals with a conflict that hardly seems transferable to the game board. The invading Martains clearly dominated their Victorian British foes. As one of the novel's characters says, "This is no more war than there is war between men and ants." In fact, human civilization was not saved by any of its own efforts, but by a *deus ex machina.* The Martians fell prey to terrestrial microbes to which they had no resistance. All very well for a story, but not a particularly gamable situation.

Task Force Games has attempted to make Wells' novel work as a game, in a new release that bears the same name as the book. The results are clearly interesting and a lot of fun to play. It will, however, be up to individual gamers to judge how much tinkering with Wells' original story they can feel comfortable with.

To make THE WAR OF THE WORLDS a contest, the designer has had to postulate a more equitable military balance than was the case in the book. To be sure, the Martian war machines outclass the cavalry, artillery and infantry units arrayed against them, but the humans are not pushovers and do possess a chance of destroying the invaders. They have something of a numerical superiority as well.

THE WAR OF THE WORLDS (henceforth: TWotW) has a 20" x 24" full-color map that depicts the city of London and its immediate surroundings. The scale is one mile per hex, so much of the map consists of city squares. Other pertinent terrain types include hills, forests/parks, a river running through the center of the city, and a criss-cross of rail lines. The hexes are ¾" wide while the counters are ½", so it is easy to see the terrain behind the playing pieces.

The game comes with two hundred counters, about half of which are informational. The Human counter mix consists of eighteen regiments each of cavalry, artillery and infantry. The Martian has 10 cylinders and 30 tripods.

TWotW's rules are ordered in the same manner as they would apply in the sequence of play. The turn begins with the landing of that turn's Martian cylinder. For each of the first ten of the game's twelve turns, a cylinder is landed according to a target hex list pre-plotted by the Martian player before the game begins. Cylinders are subject to random scattering and possible destruction, depending on what type of terrain they land in. The targeting of the cylinders is important to the Martian player's strategy; he needs to get his relatively slow tripods into London and thus must plot his target hexes, especially those on the later turns, near the chancy city hexes.

Humans march only an inglorious 4 or 5 miles a day. But, since units may use both normal movement and rail movement in a single turn, human units are very mobile. Combat for human units is one of the game's most innovative aspects. Before the game begins, the Martian player selects one of six human attack tables. These tables list each type of human unit or paired combination of units stacked together in the order of their effect on Martian units. The list gives the dice rolls, with three dice, that will eliminate a Martian unit. The catch is that the human player can only learn which units are most effective by a process of trial and error. To reflect the initial surprise the Martians enjoyed, the human player is forbidden to attack until the Martians have proved hostile by attacking themselves, something the smart Martian player won't do until enough cylinders have landed to really give him some power. The human player receives reinforcements on specially designated depot city hexes according to a deployment card chosen before the game.

Martian movement is a bit slower than the human since they can't take advantage of the rail system, though tripods are exempt from terrain costs. Their combat is more traditional. Up to four adjacent human units may be attacked; the number is cross-indexed with the throw of two dice to yield a result of either no effect, disruption, or destruction. The fewer units attacked, the better the chance for their destruction. Terrain affords the humans some protection.

The goal of the Martians is the destruction of as many of the London city hexes as possible and the preservation of his units. City hexes are devastated by a tripod moving through them, so a single Martian unit can destroy as many as four hexes per turn. It behooves the humans to constrain Martian movement, especially around the city; this is best done by forming lines of units and interlocking zones of control between the city and the tripods. This really is the only strategy the humans player can follow with any chance of success, but one can question how much this captures the feel of the book.

The humans may use three optional naval units (remember the battle between the torpedo ram *Thunderchild* and the tripods in the mouth of the Thames?) which, while restricted to the river, are very powerful. The Martian player may even things up by using the optional rule allowing for flying war machines.

THE WAR OF THE WORLDS is a good effort. The physical components are well done and good use is made of graphics. I found the rules to be straightforward, easy to understand and virtually glitch-free. The opposing sides are faced with quite different problems and with dissimilar forces and tactics to attain their goals, appropriate enough for a game pitting Earthmen against invaders from space.

The game's resemblance to its namesake is not as complete as one might hope, though strict adherence to the novel would result in an ungamable situation. The Martian tripods are formidable but not as awesome as in the book, and no mention is made of the secondary weapons the Martians used in the book, the black gas canister and red weed. The omission of these latter items could be put down to the game's length; it purports to simulate the first dozen days of the Martian invasion. Despite these minor quibbles, which are more or less a matter of taste anyway, TWotW does a good job of taking an interesting but very unbalanced situation and making it into a fun game.

THE WAR OF THE WORLDS was designed by Allen D. Eldridge and costs $9.95. Boxed, with 20" x 24" map, 216 die-cut counters, 8-page 8½" x 11" rulebook, and three 8½" x 11" pages of charts and tables. Published 1980. Two players; playing time 2-3 hours.

GAME DESIGN: Theory and Practice

Part IX: Combat Resolution

by Nick Schuessler and Steve Jackson

The use of a probability table to resolve combat has been with commercial wargaming since its inception. As such, the basic elements of the CRT have become fairly standardized: a comparison of strengths along the top, some kind of random number results down the side, and the actual results of the combat in the middle of the matrix. There have been some small variations on this format, but basically we are using nearly the same CRT found in *Tactics II.*

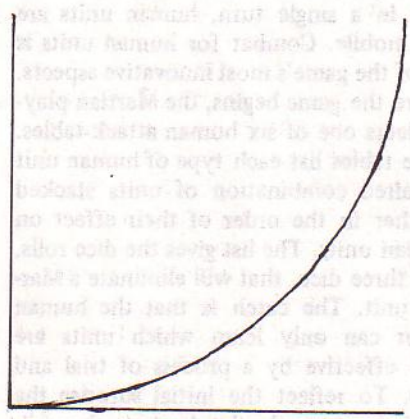
Acceptance of the CRT stems from two very sound design conventions. First, the attacker needs more than parity to carry off any reasonable offensive action. And second, an increase in the attacker's superiority will result in a more than proportional increase in defender's casualties. That is, a 6:1 attack is a good deal more than twice as costly to the defender than a 3:1 attack. Both of these precepts have very sound historical bases. It is some tribute to the early designers that they guessed right in developing the first CRTs.

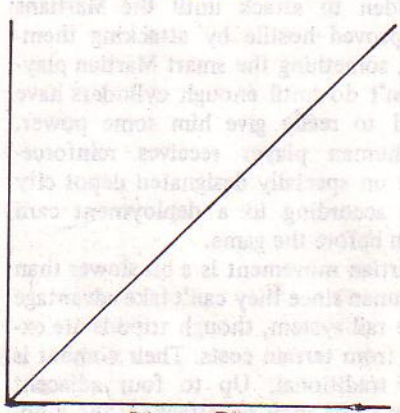
A Digression into Theory

Most of the literature has been somewhat vague on exactly what the CRT does and why the results fall where they do. Certainly there has been no underestimation of the importance of the CRT; some writers even call it the "heart" of the thing. But there has also been a certain amount of mystique and fuzzy romance in this "heart."

When I began dissecting the organ, it became apparent that there were actually two basic modules that could be used for CRTs. At the tactical level, it seemed that the effects of direct fire would move along a linear progression. That is, slight increases in velocity and caliber would bring about corresponding slight increases in penetration and killing power. At the strategic level, the effects ran closer to the conventions in the "standard" CRT discussed above, i.e., an increase in the attacker's strength would result in a disproportionate increase in the defender's casualties. The problem was how to define exactly what was going on.

I assumed that there was some point at which the attacker had virtually no chance of eliminating the defender; that is, odds of "one-to-some-number" (1:*n*). By the same token, there must be some point where the attacker's superiority is such that the possibility of eliminating the defender approaches 100%; i.e., "some-number-to-one" (*n*:1). These somewhat simpleminded extremes seemed to provide the outlines of the theoretical basis of the CRT. The plots followed logically, given the level of play. For the strategic games, I simply put in a geometrical curve, and for tactical combat, a straight linear plot was used. The results are shown.





These theoretical plots were compared with some actual CRTs, and, allowing for some inevitable distortions, the correlations were good.

This little exercise was most interesting because it provided some clues as to exactly what the designer does in developing a CRT. First, and most obviously, the designer sets the limits of the CRT by deciding just what values will be used for 1:*n* and *n*:1. The more increments that are in this range, the more the designer will be able to "fine tune" the CRT – getting it closer to the curve. For example, an odds range of 1:2 to 6:1 provides only seven columns with which to work. A range of 1:4 to 12:1, on the other hand, gives 15 possibilities. The designer also has the option to "contract" the matrix, to hold it inside the limits of the 1:*n* and *n*:1 extremes. For historical or design reasons, the designer might want a situation where there is no chance of an automatic "defender eliminated," regardless of the odds. The plot would still hold true, but the right boundary would be shifted back towards the center.

The second big decision the designer makes is how many increments will be on the other axis. Six, twelve, or 100 possibilities? Again, the more increments, the more flexibility to the table (and the more complications).

There are a number of problems with this scheme, and I'm not sure at times whether my answers to these problems are valid, or simply rationalizations. For example, can there really be a 1:*n*, an odds where the attacker has no chance of destroying the defender? What about the great battles in history where a greatly outnumbered force won: Alexander against the Persians, or Lee at Chancellorsville? My first reaction would be to say that, by definition, 1:*n* is the place where the attacker has no chance, so none of the examples can possibly fit. However, that smacks too much of glibness and a circular definition.

At the other extreme, we have the

"200% problem." Since n:1 ends with the curve heading into infinity, what in the world would be the result of n:1+1? And of course, there is an objection similar to the low end. Can there be a situation where the attacker has a perfect chance; what about garbled orders, rainstorms, thrown horseshoes, and the like? And what about the situation where the superiority of force becomes detrimental, where the troops get in each other's way?

To be absolutely safe, I'll retreat into "more work needs to be done." The theoretical foundations of CRTs are very obtuse right now. If my plots aren't the ultimate answer, then we need to find some that are. Up to now, the approach to the CRT has been quite empirical. If the history book said that the loser got chewed up with 3:1 odds, then the designer plugged "D-Elim" into the 3:1 column and began to tinker. Until we can understand the pieces underneath the CRT, the "heart" of our wargames will remain guesswork.

CRT Technology

Constructing a CRT is only forbidding until you realize that there are really only a limited number of spaces to fill in. The two "ends" of the matrix are going to be straightforward, i.e., low odds will benefit the defender and high odds will benefit the attacker. The close calls will come in the middle.

The basic decision on how many increments will be on each axis will also, to a large degree, determine about how many kinds of results you can use. A 42-position matrix (odds from 1:2 to 6:1 and a single-die result) means that the number of results must be somewhat limited – perhaps eliminated, exchange, retreat, and no effect. Since each increment of result represents a 16% probability, the idea of a dozen or so types of results would become a bit awkward.

Also, the decision on the size of the CRT will limit the options of building in the "non-standard" result, e.g., a small, valiant force hitting the "lucky roll" and wiping out a superior enemy. With a single die, you are limited to between six to ten different results (allowing for "off table" results due to die roll modifications). To say that there is a statistical probability of 10% to 16% for the "lucky roll" strains credulity. On the other hand, two dice enlarges the table so that the smallest result (snake-eyes) comes in at about 2% – much closer to Horatio at the bridge.

Oftentimes there is a tendency to forget just what those dice rolls really mean. The table gives the percentage for die rolls. I might add that the "arrival" of percentile dice is a welcome development in CRT technology. They allow for much more precision in the CRT. No more is the poor designer forced into "fitting" a result into six or twelve options.

However, designers generally have been very conservative in tinkering with the basic *Tactics II* format. Part of this hesitation is simply common sense. The basic CRT works quite well, and some of the tinkering in recent years approaches "improvements" on the shape of the wheel. At the same time, we might note that the possibilities for innovation in the CRT are virtually unlimited. Some of the more interesting current innovations include differential odds, double results, strength point losses, and the like.

Most CRTs use proportional odds. That is, the attacker's strength is compared to the defender's strength to obtain a proportion; e.g., 3:1, 6:1, etc. With a normal combat strength range of 1 to 15, some sort of "rounding" was required, and usually it was in favor of the defender. Thus, 13:7 became 1:1. The offensive-minded complained that in certain cases the bias in favor of the defender was too pronounced. Differential odds has the defender subtract his strength from the attacker. Thus, in our example, 13:7 would become +6.

The idea of the double result really hasn't been used all that much, but it's an interesting concept. Most of the CRT results affect only one party or the other, except for the venerable "exchange." However, it would be possible to put two results in each position in the matrix: one for the attacker and one for the defender. Such results would show that even a successful attacker might not step away completely unbloodied. For example, in one of the high odds columns where most of the results are "defender eliminated," it would be possible to show what the costs were. There could be a result "attacker exchange/defender eliminated," "attacker retreat/defender eliminated," etc.

MISSED, DAMMIT!

Richard Berg's *Terrible Swift Sword* introduced the idea of single strength point losses. Some of us had always been skeptical about the idea of a single die roll resulting in "defender eliminated." The system was a bit of a mechanical nightmare. Each unit required a second counter to give its current strength; the stacks doubled in size, and calculating the odds was painstaking. Still, it represented an attempt to impose the "feel" of how units really dissolve away.

Another fairly common motif has been the "off table" results. As design innovation moved away from manipulating the combat strengths to manipulating the CRT, the "die roll modification" came into use. Since subtractions and additions to the die roll could take the result "off the table," there was a need to expand beyond the actual die results. So we see the addition of a "7," "0," and "-1" to the single die roll.

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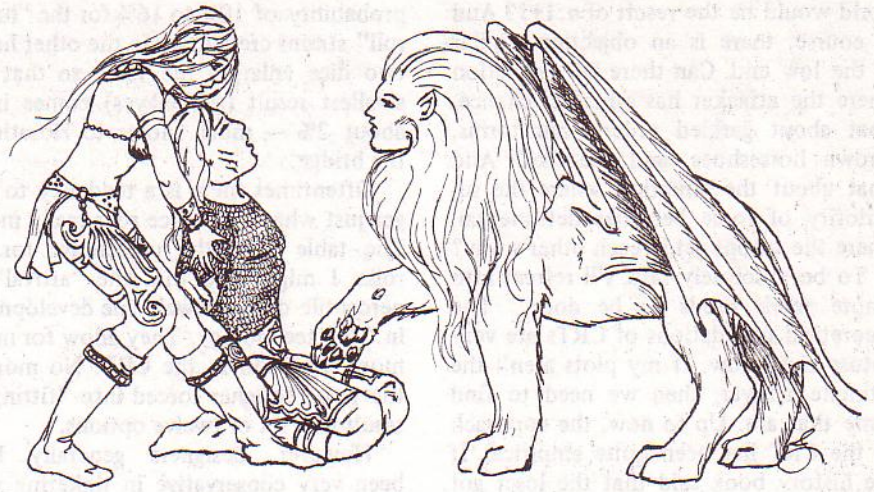

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ABBREVIATIONS

AC = armor class
AD&D = *Advanced Dungeons and Dragons*
AH = The Avalon Hill Company
APA = amateur press association (sometimes action point allowance)
BEM = bug-eyed monster
CHA (or CHR) = charisma
CON = constitution
CPM = control process monitor
c.p. = copper piece(s)
CR = credit(s)
C&S = *Chivalry and Sorcery*
CRT = combat results table (sometimes cathode ray tube, i.e., TV screen)
d = die (3d6 means three 6-sided dice)
D&D = *Dungeons and Dragons*
DM = dungeon master (sometimes die modifier)
DX (or DEX) = dexterity
EHP = evil high priest
e.p. = experience point(s) (sometimes electrum piece(s))
FBI = Flying Buffalo, Inc.
FGU = Fantasy Games Unlimited
FRP(G) = fantasy role-playing (game)
GAMA = Games Manufacturers Association
GDW = Games Designers' Workshop
GM = game master
g.p. = gold piece(s)
h.p. = hit point(s)
HTK = hits to kill
IQ (or INT) = intelligence
K = kilo-bytes of memory
LGM = little green men
LK = luck
MA = movement allowance (sometimes magical/military/mechanical aptitude/ability)
MR = monster rating
MU = magic user
NPC = non-player character
OSG = Operational Studies Group
OSI = Ohio Scientific
PBM = play by mail
PET = Personal Electronic Transactor (by Commodore)
POW = power
RAM = random-access memory
ROM = read-only memory
S&T = *Strategy and Tactics*
SF&F = science fiction and fantasy
SIZ = size
s.p. = silver piece(s)
SPI = Simulations Publications, Inc.
SR = saving roll (sometimes strike rank)
ST (or STR) = strength
T&T = *Tunnels and Trolls*
TFG = Task Force Games
TFT = *The Fantasy Trip*
TRS = Tandy-Radio Shack
TSR = TSR Hobbies, Inc. (formerly Tactical Studies Rules)
UPP = Universal Personality Profile
WIS = wisdom
ZOC = zone of control

4TH DIMENSION (TSR); $10.00. Designed by John A. Hall. Boxed, with 4-page rulebook, 10½" x 8¾" mapsheet (cardboard), and 26 plastic playing pieces. For two players; playing time 30-40 minutes. Published 1979.

4TH DIMENSION is a highly abstract game dealing with conflict between the armies of two leaders, called time-lords, in the era when man has conquered the 4th dimension. The combat system is close to *Stratego,* by Milton Bradley. The movement and combat systems are extremely simple, and yet 4TH DIMENSION is very challenging.

4TH DIMENSION is one of those games which proves that a game does not have to be complex to be fun and exciting. The gameboard and the pieces are real works of art. But, of course, every game has its drawbacks . . .

Beware, simulation freaks! Don't come within playing distance of 4TH DIMENSION. Game scale is reduced to "one space" and "one turn," and realism in nearly every form is thrown out the window. I would much rather have bought this game in a reasonable plastic bag and have counters and pay only three bucks than dish out $10.00 for a game with rules about half the size of the average Microgame.

As I said, 4TH DIMENSION is easy, but also fun and playable. I would recommend it to the average SF gamer, who has enough money, but definitely not to a simulation fan.

–Andy Davis

IT (Attack International); $2.95. Designed by Dave Casciano. Includes 8-page rulebook, 16" x 10" mapsheet, and 32 die-cut counters. One or two players; playing time 20-40 minutes. Published 1978.

IT is a basic tank battle game in which a huge computerized war machine attacks an outpost guarded by a small-unit defense force. Sound familiar? IT is obviously an imitation of *Ogre.* The rules are simplistic and disgustingly incomplete.

I honestly have to say that the only thing that I liked about IT was the interesting rules dealing with building the IT machine. Some of the weapon and defense systems would make an exciting variant to *Ogre*, although some of them are totally useless in IT.

Now for the drawbacks, and there are many. IT is probably the worst wargame that I have ever seen, bar none.

When I scrutinized IT, I considered burning it outright. The missile rules and much of the combat system are simply not there, and the rest of the game is so vague that you have to make up your own rules to play. Also, the map is too large for the box, and even the rules have to be folded to fit.

In conclusion, I have to say that every gamer should stay far, far away from IT.

–Andy Davis

KNIGHTS & MAGICK (Heritage); $19.95. Designed by Arnold Hendrick. Four 8½" x 11" booklets, one 8½" x 5¼" booklet, errata sheet, summary sheet, boxed. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

This is a curious game, a set of miniatures rules in its basic form. However, with the use of optional rules, it can become akin to an open-ended fantasy role-playing game. The ultimate scenarios deal with army vs. army war, fought with expendable troops but "character" heroes and wizards who can be rehired from conflict to conflict.

This is an engaging game system. A great deal of work went into this package, and it shows. Man-to-man combat, sieges, magic(k) use, heraldry, army recruitment, hero & wizard recruitment, miniatures painting and adaption, monsters and character improvement are all covered. The artwork is generally excellent. Some innovative rules are included, such as the effects of a gruesome death on troop morale, as well as a welcome parrying rule for combat.

However, the buyer needs to look this set over. The back-of-the-box ad says the game "begins where role-playing games end." Nonsense. This is *not* a state-of-the-art FRPG. It is a set of miniatures rules with *optional* FRP rules. Even then, the role-playing is difficult; the rules generally call for hero-figures and wizard-figures to be "hired" by the players, instead of generated from scratch; and the lack of character attributes beyond combat skill, constitution, and magical ability does not contribute to the feel of FRP adventure. There are some other problems. In combat, armor prevents the wearer from being hit, but the shield hardly contributes to this function – a glaring misconception. Damage is not accumulated; a blow is either a miss or a critical (killing) wound. Only heroes and wizards can recover from being hit.

Overall, I would guardedly recommend KNIGHTS & MAGICK, but not to straight FRP gamers; they would find little of use. Fantasy and historical *miniatures* gamers will find some innovation and a good deal of resource material.

–Aaron Allston

LASER TANK (Judges Guild); $1.50. One 8½" x 11" sheet of rules, one 8½" x 11" sheet of charts, three 8½" x 11" cardstock sheets of cut-out vehicles. Two or more players; playing time 30 minutes to an hour. Published 1980.

Included on the back cover of Judges Guild's recent *Traveller* adventure, *Tancred*, were several two-dimensional cut-out vehicles for use with the adventure. These were representations of grav-tanks, armored personnel carriers, jeeps (air/rafts), scooters, and weapons turrets – all superimposed with the standard *Traveller*-sized square grid for use with 15mm *Traveller* miniatures. Some were back-printed to show the insides of the covered vehicles. To make use of these aids, however, the back cover of the adventure had to be cut up. Perhaps realizing that some players wouldn't want to do this and – undoubtedly – seeing a way to make extra sales off the miniature idea, someone at Judges Guild seems to have thought of marketing the vehicle sheets separately, along with some simplistic rules, as a miniature game.

I bought LASER TANK to use as a visual aid when I use miniatures in a *Traveller* campaign. For that purpose it is well worth the price. It will save a referee the trouble of drawing vehicles on a sheet of paper in setting up his miniature encounters. And the vehicles *are* nicely detailed for this purpose.

However, as a set of miniature rules, LASER TANK leaves much to be desired. Most of the two pages of rules is taken up with descriptions of the vehicles, and the rest is almost all charts. What rules do exist are pretty basic – almost self-evident. Furthermore, the charts seem incomplete. For example, there does not seem to be any indication that firing at the listed "long" or "short" ranges is any less effective than firing at "effective" range.

All and all, LASER TANK isn't a bad buy for use in a role-playing campaign. And, for a quicky, little-thought AFV battle, the LASER TANK rules (and vehicles) might prove sufficient for some. Real miniature armor enthusiasts, though, would be advised to look elsewhere for SF armor rules. If you do buy LASER TANK for the miniature rules, well, don't say you weren't warned.

–William A. Barton

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MAGIC WOOD (International Team); $24.95. 28" x 28" octagonal board in five pieces, 61 ¾" counters, 8½" x 5½" rules booklet, boxed. 2-4 players; playing time 30 minutes to an hour. Published 1980.

Elves, gnomes, goblins, and trolls try to capture each other with help from foxes, ferrets, and martens.

International Team (aka Simulation Games) comes close to having "the finest graphics" in the industry, as they claim. The game is simply beautiful. The rules are short and simple; mastering them took but 10 minutes.

Again, one must wade through three languages besides English. The translator (probably Italian) was not totally fluent in English, thus causing a few errors in the rules. Fortunately, a stapled, typed translation of the rules is included, along with errata for the original translation. Though mastering the rules took 10 minutes, getting bored with the game took only 7. There is not much excitement in the game.

Recommended to gamers 6-12 years of age.

–Elisabeth Barrington

RUNEQUEST, Boxed Ed. (Chaosium); $19.95. Designed by Steve Perrin and Ray Turney. Four 8½" x 11" booklets, 8 record sheets, one errata sheet, 6 dice, boxed. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

Those fortunates familiar with RUNEQUEST (reviewed TSG 19) know it is perhaps the most realistic FRP game in existence. It is *too* realistic for some people. They would rather not be bothered with, for example, the fact that a character's left arm can take 3 hits and has 2 points of armor, whereas his chest can take 5 hits and has 4 points of armor. (You won't see a lot of RUNEQUEST stats in this magazine for the same reason you won't see computer programs published here in assembly language – it would take too long to say anything.)

Be that as it may, the boxed edition contains a copy of the 2nd edition rules, *Apple Lane* (reviewed this issue), *Basic Role-Playing*, and *Fangs*. *Basic Role-Playing* is an introduction to RUNEQUEST, evidently written for 12-year-olds who have never heard of FRPGs before. *Fangs* is a 16-page version of *Foes* (reviewed TSG 28). The RUNEQUEST box includes just about everything you need to get into the game.

An experienced gamer, who probably bought the rules separately for $11.95, has no need of this edition. However, it might be of use to a newcomer.

–Forrest Johnson

SKULL & CROSSBONES (FGU); $12.00. Designed by Gerald D. Seypura and Anthony LeBoutillier. Boxed, with 32-page, 8½" x 11" rules booklet, 21½" x 16" Caribbean-area hex map, 21½" x 16" blank hex sheet, sheet of 25 mm scale ship deck layouts, sheet of cannons for ship layouts, character record sheet, game master's shield, 2 dice, 266 die-cut counters. Published 1980.

Yet another role-playing game from Fantasy Games Unlimited, SKULL & CROSSBONES is "role-play on the Spanish Main." Buyers are offered the opportunity to roll up a Gunner, Sailmaster, or Navigator (character classes, not talents or occupations) and cruise about the Caribbean, preying on merchant ships or beating off pirate attacks.

It's very difficult to muster any enthusiasm about this game. It would have made a very useful supplement for many other RPGs, but doesn't stand up on its own. Overall, the writing is simplistic, as are most of the game's functions. The religation of occupation and social standing to functions of character class and level tends to eliminate much of the actual performance of character development. The combat system is simple and unrealistic; it's hard to put faith in a combat system where a parry is automatically successful against any close attack, and where a roundhouse kick is a deadlier tactic than most uses of the sword. The components are complete, but dreary; handfuls of unnumbered, black-and-white counters representing battling sailors don't make the grade.

SKULL & CROSSBONES *might* be useful as an introductory RPG for gaming beginners, but many others on the market are superior in that respect. We'll have to wait a while longer for adequate sea-going role-play.

–Aaron Allston

STARFIRE II (TFG); $3.95. Designed by Barry A. Jacobs. 30-page 8½" x 11" rulebook, 108 die-cut counters, 17" x 22" map, bagged. 2 or 3 players; playing time 1 hour. Published 1980.

STARFIRE II is a game of ship-to-ship battles in space. The game has 9 scenarios, detailing battles between 3 interstellar powers. It shares the same future history as the original *Starfire*, and a section linking the two games is included.

This game's major strength lies in its simple movement and combat systems. Players alternate moving their ships one hex at a time, giving the game a "dogfight" flavor. As weapons hit a vessel, ship systems are crossed off. This eliminates a lot of die rolling and chart consultation. Fighters – without which the game would be a cut-down version of *Starfire* – are given special abilities (such as a second movement phase) to let them stand up to bigger vessels.

Unfortunately, the game scale and description of equipment don't make sense together. Spacecraft, for example, are said to be powered by "ion motors" – weak, low thrust propulsion systems – yet can go from stock-still to 35% of lightspeed in 10 seconds! "Fairly conventional" guided missiles zip along at 99% of lightspeed, yet do negligible damage when they hit. These inconsistencies don't detract from playability, but do make the rationale a little less believable.

Despite the flaws, I recommend STARFIRE II. It is quick-playing and fun.

–Stefan Jones

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SUPPLEMENTS

APPLE LANE (Chaosium); $4.95. Designed by Greg Stafford. Supplement to *RuneQuest*. One 28-page booklet. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1978.

In Sartar, between Jonstown and Duckpoint, travellers may pass through the small community of Apple Lane, location of the well-known Gringle's Pawnshop. Nearby are the scenic Rainbow Mounds. Usually, things are pretty quiet in Apple Lane. But, as in all Glorantha, there is occasionally some work for fighting men.

This is a good supplement for novice *RuneQuest* referees. Things are spelled out in sufficient detail for most purposes; not much improvisation is required. The two scenarios given show a lot of imagination, and are suitable for beginning characters.

On the negative side, experienced characters may find APPLE LANE a wee bit tame.

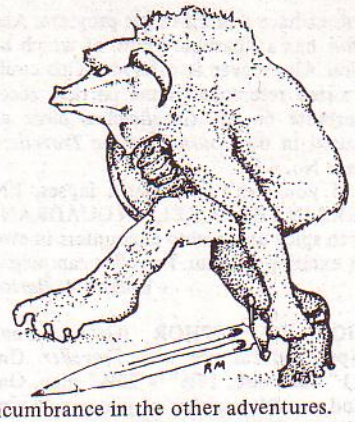
Recommended to *RuneQuest* referees.

–Forrest Johnson

CIRCLE OF ICE (FBI); $1.99. Designed by Paul Creelman. "Pocket Adventure" for T&T. One 12-page, 4½" x 7" booklet. One player; playing time 30 minutes. Published 1980.

The Realm of Dark, in constant war with the Realm of Light, has invited your character to spy out the neutral Circle of Ice. *Huh? What? You don't understand that? Never mind; the background doesn't matter much anyway.*

This is a well-organized and moderately entertaining adventure. Treasure comes mostly in the form of magic items; players will appreciate this, since FBI has thrown out the old rule of g.p. = e.p. Characters actually use a lot of the miscellaneous equipment which only counts for



encumbrance in the other adventures.

The flow of this adventure is rather arbitrary and inflexible, but better than most of the others. More seriously, it favors a certain kind of character, and at one point seems to encourage cheating.

All in all, a pretty impressive effort. If you don't mind paying a couple of bucks for half an hour's entertainment, this supplement is for you.

–Forrest Johnson

THE CITY OF CARSE, 2nd Edition (Midkemia Press); $8.95. Designed by Stephen and April Abrams. 80-page, 8½" 11" book, and a 17" x 22" map. Published 1980.

Carse is an independent city somewhere in the Kingdom of Midkemia. THE CITY OF CARSE is not an adventure; rather it is a complete and detailed city inhabited by many different peoples and races. CARSE contains social orders, religions, judiciary hierarchies, markets, secret societies, and detailed descriptions of everything from stables to cobblers to brothels. CARSE is designed for use with all FRP systems, along with its companion, *Cities* (reviewed, TSG 33).

Graphics in this book are excellent. Throughout the book are map sections with good detail. Each building and road is labelled. The accompanying descriptions are rarely more than a couple of pages after the map section to which they refer. In the back of the book is a cross-referenced index to the whole book by area code (alphabetized). Available supplies and services are listed, briefly described, and given a suggested price (e.g., Wagon, with sleeping for 4: 350 gp).

The price on this package is a little too high for the contents. In comparison with some of the other "City" type booklets available from other companies, $9 seems a bit too much to pay for one booklet and map. Otherwise, there is very little wrong with this book.

One of the finest play aids I have come across. Recommended to any gamer who requires a mediæval-styled city.

–Elisabeth Barrington

ENCOUNTERS IN THE CORELIAN QUADRANT (Group One); $3.50. Approved for *Traveller*. One 8½" x 11" 18-page booklet. Playing time and number of players variable. Published 1980.

ENCOUNTERS IN THE CORELIAN QUADRANT is the second book of starship encounters from Group One. Like its predecessor, *Encounters in the Phoenix Quadrant*, CORELIAN consists of detailed descriptions and diagrams of four new starship types and their crews. Each ship is given a compartment-by-compartment breakdown with all necessary information, including cargo, armamant, computer programs, and so on. Each crewman is

'*RuneQuest* is the most playable and elegant fantasy role-playing [game] designed to date.' –ARES MAGAZINE. '*RuneQuest* is for those who want a fast-playing active game and who don't mind developing social systems and cultures for their world. I highly recommend *RuneQuest* for those who want an introduction to role-playing, or those who desire a refreshing change.' –FANTASTIC SCIENCE FICTION. 'All these roles are presented with explanations of ***the reason why*** each rule is present, as well as an ongoing story that illustrates both the application of the rules and the flow of the game. No other ruleset shows quite so well how the game is to be ***played.***' –ISAAC ASIMOV'S SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE. 'A lot of thought has gone into this game. It shows. It is playable yet realistic. You don't need several supplement books to play it. Even though it was designed to fit one particular world, it could easily be used for any world. Since this game contains a logical system, almost anything can be added to the matrix it presents. A gem of a game. You won't be disappointed.' –THE SPACE GAMER MAGAZINE. 'Aha! Finally, a book a beginner can read and understand. This book is superb. It tells you what a fantasy role-playing game is, how to create an adventurer, spells out the mechanics of playing, tells much about magic–and lots more. Interlaced throughout the book are the sagas of Rurik the Restless [and] Ariella the Priestess...specific examples of how the game might occur as it is played. Beautiful!' –The Dragon, in RECREATIONAL COMPUTING.

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listed with UPP, skills, and a description of his personality, physical appearance, equipment, and any odd quirks he or she may exhibit. New ship types documented in CORELIAN include the mercenary vessel *Griffon*, the luxury yacht *Dorian II*, the research vessel *Rewsna* and the *Ramona*, a luxury liner. All except the 200-ton *Rewsna* are 400-ton craft.

As in the earlier book, the wealth of detail concerning the ships – and especially their crews – is the most striking feature of CORELIAN. The crewmen aboard each ship seem very real – if rather odd in some cases. A few of their descriptions are somewhat whimsical (if not downright *weird*) – but then so are some of the people we meet in everyday life.

The problem with CORELIAN, as with *Phoenix*, aside from its typewritten/mimeographed appearance, is that the folks at Group One seem to have overlooked some things. Two of the ships, though armed, lack target programs for their computers – an essential according to *Traveller* book 2 – though the *Ramona* does have a multi-target program. And the *Griffon* has a "barbbet" gun, of which no explanation whatsoever is offered. (This could be a distorted reference to the particle accelerator barbette on the *Gazelle*-class close escort featured in the *Journal of the Travellers' Aid Society* No. 4.)

Still, if you don't mind such lapses, ENCOUNTERS IN THE CORELIAN QUADRANT can't fail to spice up starship encounters in even the most exciting of your *Traveller* campaigns.

–William A. Barton

MISSION TO ZEPHOR (Group One); $6.95. Approved for use with *Traveller*. One 8½" x 11" rulebook, 17½" x 22½" map. One referee and variable number of players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

MISSION TO ZEPHOR is the second of Group One's approved *Traveller* adventures. While its predecessor, *Pen Latol's World*, was designed as a campaign adventure on an alien world, MISSION TO ZEPHOR is more of a one-shot scenario (though there are campaign possibilities) – a mercenary mission to save the kidnapped son of an interstellar mining mogul from a group of armadillo-like aliens on a burned-out world.

MISSION TO ZEPHOR has a number of interesting points. The armadillo-ish Tshini may be a bit far-fetched, but their culture and traits are interestingly presented. The only thing unclear about them is how the pacifistic people described suddenly come up with a well-equipped rebel army. Their military organization is well-outlined, and their bases and the ruined city and temple that hold some of their secrets are aptly pictured. The overall set-up is challenging enough to tax the skill and ingenutiy of the most experienced *Traveller* players; it seems advisable that powerful characters be used – if not a full-fledged mercenary troop. The physical components are much improved over ZEPHOR's predecessor.

The main failing of MISSION TO ZEPHOR is a lack of attention to certain contradictory details. As in the earlier adventure, the areas shown on the smaller maps in the rules seem not to match the terrain features on the planetary map, though this could be a problem of scale. Also, it's often difficult to determine the exact terrain of an area from the keys on the encounter pages. The encounter tables themselves list two different geological events: ravines and precipices; and seismic activity. Yet there is but one overall table for geological encounters which doesn't completely fit either category; the instructions for this table are rather vague as well. Finally, some of the descriptions on the key to the alien base don't seem to fit the areas so numbered on the diagram.

Still, in spite of these flaws – easily compensated for by a sharp referee – MISSION TO ZEPHOR shows definite improvement on the part of Group One in their *Traveller* adventure development and should provide most players with an exciting and challenging role-playing session.

–William A. Barton

QUEEN OF THE DEMONWEB PITS (TSR); $5.50. Designed by David C. Sutherland III and Gary Gygax. Supplement to AD&D. 32-page 8½" x 11" booklet with an 8½" x 11" folder of maps. For two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

The suggested levels of characters in DEMONWEB is 10-14. This adventure is the last in a series of seven by Gary Gygax. Spell effects have been altered, and players as well as the DM should be fairly experienced. Their mission: "To crush the greatest enemy – Lolth, the Queen of the Demonweb Pits."

There are many excellent ideas in this book. As characters wend their way through the abyss of Lolth, through her webs, they are confronted by her minions, slaves, guards, and captives. It takes skill, courage, and ingenuity to make your way into (and possibly, if you're lucky, out of) the pits. A good challenge for experienced players. The graphics are up to TSR's usual neatness and simplicity, as well as being organized.

The maps were printed on each side of the inner folder – meaning you have to turn the folder over and over as the players travel through. Some of the spell alterations are unnecessary – some of the really useful ones under ordinary circumstances have been reduced to almost uselessness.

Not one of TSR's best efforts, but a worthy try.

–Elisabeth Barrington

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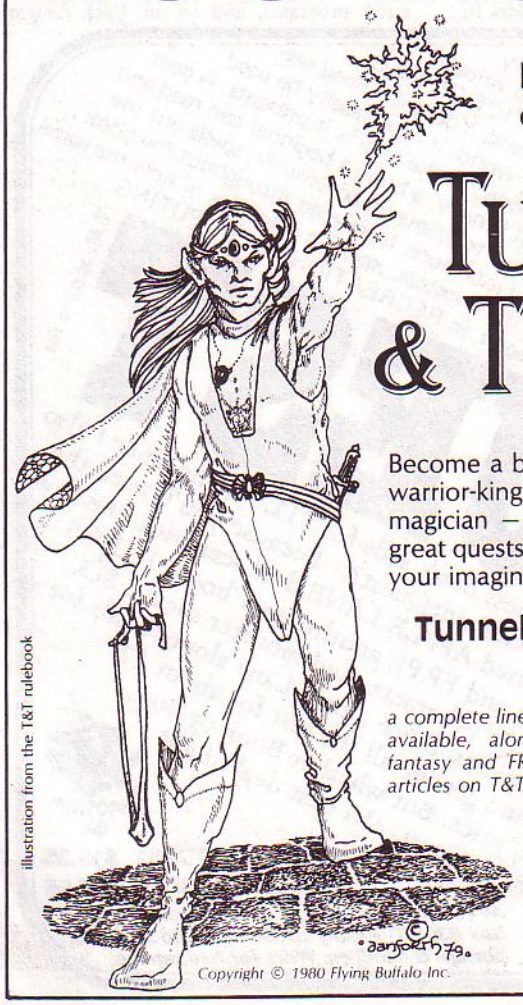

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SLAVE PITS OF THE UNDERCITY (TSR); $5.50. Designed by David Cook. Supplement to AD&D. 8½" x 11" 24-page booklet. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

"For years the coastal towns have been burned and looted by the forces of evil. You . . . have been recruited to . . . destroy the source . . ." Designed as a tournament adventure, the booklet contains tournament-tested characters and a tournament scoring system. Companion to three other "slave" scenarios.

This adventure's graphics are just like most of TSR's others – neat and organized. Information in boxes is read to or summarized for the players, and the referee takes note of all the rest of the text. And there is plenty. This is recommended for character levels 4-7, but works best with the nine characters provided.

The maps are a little too small for quick reference; you will need to study them well before you begin. The appearance of some of the nasties is misleading: after a while you might feel as though you have stumbled into an orcs' den rather than into an organized group of guardians.

This module does not need much re-working. Recommended as is for AD&D enthusiasts.

–Elisabeth Barrington

TANCRED (Judges Guild); $5.98. Designed by Dave Sering and Dan Hauffe. Approved for *Traveller*. One 8½" x 11" 48-page book. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1980.

Tancred is a planet in the Outreamer subsector of the Imperium, a planet owned and exploited by its nobility; it is a planet in the throes of rebellion. JG remains consistent in the high quality of its *Traveller* releases, TANCRED being no exception. The book equips the referee with nearly every item of information necessary to create exciting adventures in and around the Tancred system, including assassinations, jail breaks, double-crosses, and mercenary firefights. Featured are subsector, planetary, city, starport, and structure maps; organizational breakdowns of rebel cells, police, starport security forces, and the mercenary regiment on planet; animal, event, and human encounter tables; and NPCs galore! There are even cut-out vehicles, such as air/rafts, armored personnel carriers, and grav tanks, on the back cover for use in miniature battles.

TANCRED is notable for its complete coverage of the situation on the planet. NPCs are included in fine detail for almost any encounter situation – including three complete mercenary squads. Even travel times for characters on foot, riding animals, air/raft and ATV are listed to cut down on computations.

TANCRED's greatest flaw is in its all-too-numerous typos. While these present no serious obstacles to play, one would think that by now Judges Guild could afford to hire a decent proofreader! Unless one knows, for instance, what number is closest to the letter "r" on the typewriter, some skill levels and characteristics of NPCs will be incomprehensible. Such errors detract from the professionalism of an otherwise top-quality product.

Still, most role-players probably won't be all that concerned with proofreading errors (a chronic symptom in the field) and so should find TANCRED near the top of all the *Traveller* adventures currently available.

–William A. Barton

THE TOUGHEST DUNGEON IN THE WORLD (Judges Guild); $4. Designed by Ken St. Andre. Solo adventure for T&T. One 28-page, 8½" x 11" booklet. One player; playing time 30 minutes and up. Published 1980. Go to 1A.

1A. Do you wonder what happened to Ken St. Andre's relationship with FBI? If you do, go to 6B. If you don't care, go to 1G.

1G. This is a T&T adventure, the first of its kind from Judges Guild. Do you like T&T? If so, go to 2C; otherwise, 7W.

2C. Consider a reversal of roles – your character, a troll, prowls his dungeon, trying to keep his larder full of long pig, and to amass a respectable hoard so he can move into a decent neighborhood. If this idea amuses you, to go 2M. If not, 7W.

2M. Do you enjoy rolling dice for hours on end, even knowing the probability of a favorable outcome is very slight? If you do, go to 5E. If you have better things to do with your time, go to 7W.

5E. Make a four dollar saving roll vs. pocketbook. If you make it, rush out and buy THE TOUGHEST DUNGEON IN THE WORLD immediately. If you fail your roll, go to 7W.

6B. So do I. Go to 1G.

7W. Oh well, there are plenty of other games on the market.

–Forrest Johnson

StarMaster

Air screams around your ships as they enter the atmosphere. Missile-launchers fire deafeningly to port and starboard while atmosphere-fighters drop in shrieking dives from their hangers below. Warriors, tightly clenching their weapons, check their pressure suits one last time and climb in grim silence into their landing shuttles. In the distance five more heavy cruisers of your empire are firing and unloading their cargo, their hulls gleaming crimson in the light of the red sun above.

This is not a drill. Already laser and missile fire from the mile-wide guardian fortresses below have turned the sky into an exploding nightmare of smoke, fire, and fragmented metal. Planes and shuttles twist and dodge down towards a landscape rapidly becoming an inferno of flame and radiation.

This is no mere raid. For years your people had explored nearby systems without violence, trading technology to the primitive civilizations there in exchange for raw materials. Some species had even thought you gods.

Then you met the Aeratang. Merciless, brutal, they destroyed your exploring ships and began to slaughter your colonies. But you found their home planet and launched the greatest fleet your kind ever built to carry the war to your enemy. To fight for your very survival.

Will it be enough?

©1979 Schubel & Son

StarMaster is a correspondence game of galactic exploration, diplomacy, and conquest allowing for interaction not only between each player and the worlds of the galaxy, but between the players themselves.

New players begin further out from the Galactic Center than established players allowing them to develop themselves among equals. You may lead a powerful reptilian race, carving out a vast empire of colony and subject worlds; or perhaps an insectoid species, engaged in a holy crusade to convert the galaxy to the worship of their many-legged god.

As the chosen ruler of your people, you must decide what diplomatic and military policies will be followed in order to lead your kind to dominance among the sentient beings of the galaxy.

The galaxies of StarMaster are a complete fantasy environment of solar systems, with geographies ranging from worlds near absolute zero to worlds where rivers of molten tungsten bubble, with technologies spanning from rock-throwing cave-dwellers to advanced Elder races with near-godlike abilities.

Nor is the StarMaster environment limited in terms of playing area. There are multiple galaxies allowing for extra-galactic invasions across the voids. There are both natural and constructed gateways to (and from!) other dimensions and parallel universes.

StarMaster is limitless in possibilities, bounded only by imagination! It is a game where, literally, anything is possible.

StarMaster offers these features:

- Design your species as if you could have directed evolution to this moment.
- Design your homeworld in terms of temperature, atmosphere, and mass.
- Choose your government and social order.
- You decide the production for all worlds of your empire, building colonizing ships, merchantmen, warships, warriors, and fortresses.
- Technology increases steadily, permitting faster, larger ships, deadlier weapons, and scientific breakthroughs.

The galaxies are dotted with the ruins of Elder civilizations lacking the strength to master the stars. Can you lead your world to greatness where so many others fell short?

StarMaster may be entered for $12.00 which includes the first two turns, set up turn, a rule book and all necessary material (except return postage). Thereafter, turns are $3.50 each. A rule book may be purchased separately for $3.50.

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P O Box 214848
Sacramento, CA 95821

THE VILLAGE OF HOMMLET (TSR); $4.50. Designed by Gary Gygax. Supplement to D&D. 24-page 8½" x 11" booklet. Two or more players; playing time indefinite. Published 1979.

This module is recommended for first level characters. They start the game weary, weak, and practically void of money. Supposedly, this town they are travelling to is a great place to earn fortunes, defeat evil (or good), and lose lives. They arrive, in what appears to be a very warm and hospitable town. But about every other person is a spy for the local minions of evil, most of which are more powerful in every respect than the party.

I found this a very playable module. With a good DM this module can be very fun. Players "get into" their roles, the thieves stealing from the revellers at the inn, the fighters getting drunk under the table. Good map, and well-keyed. Floor plans were given for the buildings of importance. There is even a local dungeon . . . well done on the whole.

On the negative side, some of the evil spies are entirely too powerful for the party to tackle, and the local high level good characters are hardly ever interested in aiding the adventurers.

A very good introductory game, and I certainly recommend it as an introduction to D&D.

–Kirby T. Griffis

PLAY AIDS

CAMPAIGN SERIES GRID SHEETS (Indicia Associates, POB 2900, Oakland, CA 94618); square grid $2.50, hex grid $3.50. Published 1980.

Both of these sheets are 36" x 50". The square (1") grid sheet is printed on only one side. The hex grid sheet has numbered hexes on both sides (16mm on one side; 19mm on the other). A plastic overlay is available for $4.50.

Large enough for the most prolific gamers. Maps of any kind can be drawn directly on the paper or on the overlay to erase later. The price is entirely reasonable for what you receive.

For some gamers, the sheets may be entirely *too* large. As 25mm and 15mm hexes are more common playing sizes, they would have been better than 16 and 19mm.

Recommended to gamers of any system using either of these grid types.

–Elisabeth Barrington

D&D PLAYER CHARACTER RECORD SHEETS (TSR); $4.50. Play aid for D&D. 8½" x 11" book containing 16 record sheets. Published 1980.

These sheets are for players of Basic D&D. They help you keep track of hit points, armour class, characteristics, saving rolls, special abilities, and more. One side is for most of the numerical information; the other, weapons, magic items, etc.

They are very neatly printed in large type and fairly well organized. There is room for all the numbers and other information necessary, and a box for your character's sketch or symbol.

However, this is for really *simple* D&D players: character class is defined as fighter, magic-user, thief, cleric, *dwarf, elf,* or *halfling.* The section, "to-hit roll needed," does not provide for differing types of weapons – just 10 numbers for the respective armour classes.

Recommended for Basic D&D gamers.

–Elisabeth Barrington

COMPUTER GAMES

BENEATH APPLE MANOR (The Software Exchange); cassette $15, disk $20. Integer Basic program by Don Worth for the Apple II, 16K. One player; playing time 2-6 hours. Published 1978.

BAM is much like a combination of D&D and T&T. The player begins with his character on the first floor of Apple Manor. Below are caves and dungeons. The object is to vanquish monsters and gather treasure, so that you will eventually be ready to slay the giant dragon who guards the magic golden apple of Apple Manor.

Strong points are numerous, the most impressive being the map itself. The computer designs each level randomly, each time making the rooms different sizes and shapes and placing them differently. The use of magic is available not only through spells, but through enchanted weapons, potions, and other such objects.

The weak points are very few. One problem is the time used to generate a new level. With the disk drive, it requires several minutes. With a tape-based program, it is necessary to load programs from the tape just to make a new level.

All in all, strengths by far outnumber weaknesses. The game is highly recommended.

–Alan Isabelle

GALAXY INVASION (Big Five Software, P.O. Box 9078-185, Van Nuys, CA 91409); $14.95. Cassette for the TRS-80, 16K. One level of difficulty. One player; playing time indefinite. Cannot be saved. Published 1980.

First read the recommendation at the bottom – then go mail your letter. Read the rest of the review afterwards. That's OK, I'll wait. Mmm, de dah, hmmmm, tap tap. Oh, you're back. OK.

Space is filled with alien ships above your lone missile base. You have two bases in reserve and get one more for every ten thousand points you score. Stifle a yawn, right? Plug in the speaker knowing the stupid sound effects will screw up the ship movement, right? Watch for the little Xs and Os to shoot away your protection as you sweep them from the sky, right? WRONG! What's this? The blasted things really look like they're crawling along the screen. They're not only shooting at you, they're also diving in to ram while taking evasive action. The sound effects are perfect without affecting motion at all. Best of all, the flagships give you advance warning they're going to shoot and unless you can kill a flagship fast, each and every flagship on the board is going to ZAP you with a ray beam that never misses and ALWAYS kills. Arggggh.

There are many strong points. Beyond the wonderful graphics, sound, and concept, it is play balance that stands out at the most. The slowly increasing number of flagships and their alerts is wonderfully balanced by the 10,000 point get-another-base.

Weak points – none.

Recommendation: this is one of those very rare state of the art game-programs. A wonderful program. A better than wonderful game. Buy it immediately. (Before they do something sensible, like double the price.) Now go back and read the end of the second paragraph.

–Jon Mishcon

NORTH ATLANTIC CONVOY RAIDER (Microcomputer Games); $15.00. Cassette for the TRS-80, Apple, and PET. One player; playing time 30 minutes. Published 1980.

You control the *Bismarck* on its historic breakout into the North Atlantic. All that is necessary is to input the heading (0-360 degrees) and the duration of time to be spent at that heading. At this time nothing is visible except the *Bismarck* and the ports that you can return to. The computer increments time in roughly half hour intervals and reports what you have seen and when. At the end of the time you entered, it redraws the map, updating it according to what British ships have come in sight. You can now change course and enter a new duration for the course. Sometimes you'll find a convoy. This tends to lead the British ships to you, and even though you sink 40-50 convoy ships, it seems to have little effect on the victory conditions. To win you need to return to port, after sinking at least three British warships.

The game has very simple mechanics but allows the *Bismarck* to evolve a fairly complex strategy. The game seems to accurately reflect the interrelated variables of weaponry, time, speed, and position for each of the ships in use. It is easy to alter the level of difficulty by changing the number of British ships available to the computer. The rules don't mention the fact, but all that need be done is to edit line 10, changing the value of the variable "B" from 4 to the desired number of ships, up to a total number of 7.

The game has two problems, each of which are easily overcome. The first is that it is written in Basic, which means that if you want to pursue a course for more than two hours, it will take the computer a while to calculate all the intermediate moves. This is easily fixed by compiling the program. The tactical phase is less than satisfying, as the only input you have is who you want to shoot at. A tactical display would be a big improvement.

The game overall is worthwhile for anyone who enjoys pitting his wits against the computer, and doesn't mind a little luck playing a part. However, a $10 price tag would be more in line for what you get.

David Boyle

SPACE AND SPORT GAMES (Creative Computing); $24.95. Programs by Bob Bishop and others for 32K Apple II with disk drive. One player; playing time 10 minutes.

This is a collection of nine games, only three of which – *Rocket Pilot, Saucer Invasion,* and *Star Wars* – have to do with space. *Rocket Pilot* is an extended *Lunar Lander,* where you have to take off, go over a mountain, and come down again. *Saucer Invasion* allows you to shoot slow-moving rockets at slow-moving saucers that pass overhead. *Star Wars* is a simple shoot-the-TIE-fighter game.

I'm afraid I don't have anything good to say about these games, no matter how hard I

try. It is not so much that they are inherently bad – it is just that they are simple, unsophisticated, and unchallenging. I get the distinct impression that these were written a few years ago, when the Apple was still a brand-new machine and almost no software existed for it. At that time, these would have been impressive programs, simply because nothing else like them existed. Nowadays, they look pathetic compared to some of the truly impressive stuff on the market.

There are nine games in all on this diskette, all of the same quality. I suspect all nine were placed there because the folks at Creative Computing couldn't justify selling them in smaller groups. I'm not sure they can justify selling them in this large group. Don't buy it.

–Bruce F. Webster

SUPER INVASION/SPACEWAR (Creative Computing); $29.95. This is a package of two games on disk for the Apple II, 48K. (There is also a $19.95 cassette version available, 32K.) One or two players; playing time 2-10 minutes.

These are computer versions of two very popular arcade games – *Alien Invaders* and *Space Wars* – and are a startling contrast in quality. SUPER INVASION is a very faithful reproduction of the arcade game, lacking only the *Jaws*-like music but adding some alien observers who react to your successes and failures. SPACEWAR is your standard two-ships-zipping-around-a-sun and shooting-missiles-at-each-other game.

SUPER INVASION has to rank in my current Top 3 of single-player computer games. It is a very smooth game and terribly addictive. The graphics are excellent – much smoother than I would have thought possible – and I prefer the paddle control over the button controls of the arcade game. There are only three problems. First, in the rare case that you should hit the last alien of an invasion group at the same time it destroys your last tank (which, believe it or not, I have had happen to me), the whole game freezes. Second, the button on your paddle will wear out after your 10th hour of play or so. Third, you will wear out many buttons!

SPACEWAR, on the other hand, has got to be one of the least satisfactory games I have seen. The only impressive part about it is how quickly and smoothly the two tiny ships move. The criticisms? You can't tell the ships apart. The ships are nearly impossible to steer. You must us both a paddle and button *and* two keys on the keyboard to control your ship. There is a fixed time limit which doesn't give you much of a chance to do anything. There are no sound effects.

Recommendation: buy the package for SUPER INVASION and forget SPACEWAR. And charge admission to your friends – even at 10 cents a game, you'll recoup your costs in a few weeks.

–Bruce F. Webster

HISTORICAL GAMES

OPERATION PEGASUS (TFG); $3.95. Designed by Perry Moore. Ziplock, with one 18-page 5½" x 8½" rulebook, 108 die-cut counters, one 16" x 20" map, two casualty record sheets, and one movement/CRT chart. Two players; playing time one to two hours. Published 1980.

OPERATION PEGASUS is a simulation of the 1st Air Cavalry Division's relief of the Marines at Khe Sahn in 1968. Vietnam-era games

TSG BACK ISSUES

Did you miss an article you wanted to read? Some back issues of TSG are still available:

No. 15. Wizard and Olympica designer intros; Robotics in Traveller; Floating Hulks; Ogre Update; Orcs and their Weapons; computer gaming.

No. 16. WarpWar article; Classics Simulated in Melee; Alpha Omega; Demons! (Moties in Melee); 1977 game survey results – and a LOT of reviews.

No. 17. GEV designer's intro; strategy for Chitin: I; variants for Imperium, Melee, and a combination Ogre/Rivets variant; WarpWar fiction.

No. 18. IceWar designer's intro; variant scenarios for Invasion: America and War of the Ring; additional equipment for Traveller; mounted Melee; "Referee, Declare Thyself!" (role-playing GM technique).

No. 19. POND WAR; variant units and scenarios for GEV; combining Imperium and WarpWar; Battlefleet Mars variant; reviews of Swords & Sorcery, Runequest, and Raumkrieg; MicroGame design article.

No. 20. Olympica tactics; Psionics in Traveller; TARTARS & MARTYRS; Reality in Melee; designer's optional rules for Ice War; designer's article on Starships & Spacemen; "Rip-Off Blues" (wargaming frauds).

No. 21. Interview with Dave Arneson; running a MicroGame tournament; tactics for Ogre and GEV; spaceship miniatures; Black Hole variant rules, putting the Deryni into Melee; more reviews.

No. 22. Ice War tactics; Black Hole physics; PARTY BRAWL; 1978 SF/fantasy game survey results; Fantasy Trip short story.

No. 23. Invasion of the Air Eaters designer's article; Ogre meets Ice War; Sticks & Stones expansion; Vikings and Valde in The Fantasy Trip.

No. 24. Black Hole designer's intro; "The Psychology of Wargaming"; Naval Melee; "The Four-Howitzer Defense in Ogre"; variants for Chitin: I, The Creature that Ate Sheboygan, and John Carter of Mars.

No. 25. Stellar Conquest issue . . . designer's article, tournament tactics, and variant scenarios. Also – strategy in Rivets; benefit-cost analysis for Ice War; "Everyday Life in The Fantasy Trip."

No. 26. Oneworld designer's intro; tactics in GEV; variations on Wizard; computers in wargaming; Life-sized Melee; and a variant that puts human forces into Rivets.

No. 27. Hot Spot's designer's intro; Time Travel; Nuke the Air Eaters (gaming atomic war); Weapons for Hobbits in TFT; Muskets in TFT; Game Design Part 1; 5 pages of game reviews.

No. 28. 1979 Game Survey results; Overmen in TFT; A Guide to SF/Fantasy Game Publishers; Task Force Games report; Writers' and Artists' guides; 7 pages of reviews; Game Design Part 2; Deus Ex Machina.

No. 29. Fantasy Trip designer's intro; Painting Fantasy Miniatures; Fantasy and SF game magazines surveyed; Game Design Part 3; more Deus Ex Machina; 7 pages of reviews.

No. 30. KUNG FU 2100; Painting Fantasy Miniatures Part II; Index to Game Articles; Game Design Part 4; Programmable Calculators; 10 pages of reviews.

No. 31. "Sam Beowulf"; 1980 Game Software survey; Game Design Part 5; Random Maze Generation; 9 pages of reviews.

No. 32. Traveller issue . . . Alternate Character Types, reviews of play aids, scenarios, and variants; also Game Design Part 6; Deus Ex Machina; "Minus Two Reaction;" software survey update; Yaquinto Games report; 9 pages of reviews.

No. 33. Play-by-mail issue . . . Feature reviews of four PBM games, a Warp War Campaign, Survey of PBM companies; also, Contest Report; Company Report from Schubel and Son; "End Game;" GEV scenario; Game Design Part 7; Deus Ex Machina; The Good Guys, Part I; and 10 pages of reviews.

No. 34. Miniatures issue . . . Cardboard Heroes Designer's Notes, LOTR Miniatures, Painting Fantasy Minatures Advanced Techniques, Survey of miniatures manufacturers; also "The Challenge;" Artifact Designer's Notes and Expansion Rules; 3-D Displays II; Game Design Part 8; Wish Contest winner; and 8 pages of reviews.

No. 35. The 1980 Game Survey; Solitaire Ogre; Notes for Novice DMs; The War of the Worlds featured; Insane Variants on Stomp!; Character Contest results; More Psionics for Traveller; Game Design Part IX; Deus Ex Machina; and 9 pages of reviews.

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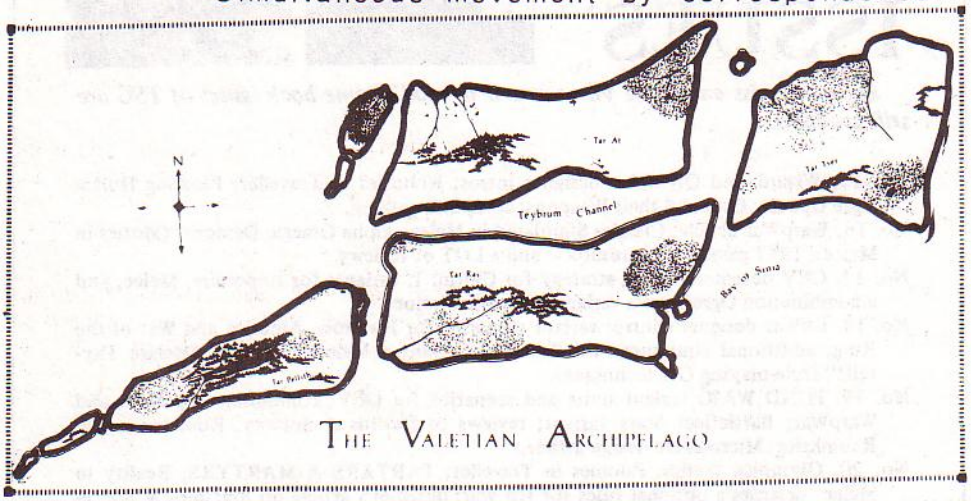

THE VALETIAN ARCHIPELAGO

...with a hissing shriek a second Rask leaped from the outcropping, swinging a short battleaxe. Telegar snapped his shield up to catch the blow but the force knocked him flat on his back a second time. As his shoulders hit he pushed up and over his head with the shield, flinging the Rask away before it could free it's axe for another try. Scrambling to his feet, Telegar faced the Rask who'd already recovered its footing. It brandished its axe warily. Telegar advanced a step and feinted with his sabre tip.

...as he pierced the Rask through, the axe missed his helm and smashed into the Dwarf's shoulder. The mail shirt withstood the edge, but the shoulder was broken.

Before Telegar could roll the Rask over to recover his sabre, the first Rask had recovered its breath and its feet...

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A 12 turn subscription to LORDS OF VALETIA is $25.00. The rulebook, a subscription to VALIANCE, for as long as you remain a player, and all starting materials (maps, supplements, etc....except for return postage) are absolutely free to players. If dissatisfied with the initial materials, new subscribers must return the Rulebook and will then receive a full refund.

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Gamesmasters Publishers Association
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Tell us you saw it in The Space Gamer.

are tough to do right because of the basic disparity of forces; surprisingly, Moore has given us a very solid and competent entry for this misunderstood portion of American history.

Part of the strength comes from the basic design decisions. Moore picked one of the few engagements where the NVA were willing to stand and fight, thus avoiding the "fading away into the bush" problem that plagues all strategic Vietnam games. And he wisely chose to "abstract" some of the trickier aspects of jungle combat: helicopters and artillery support.

The game is basically move-fight with some interesting twists included. There is a special ambush fire (and counter-ambush fire) for the jungle. Instead of combat factors, you compare the types of units fighting with the nature of the terrain. Losses are taken in individual strength points recorded on a separate chart. For would-be grunts, there is a goodly amount of chrome: B-52 strikes, mines, engineers, and a Laos sanctuary.

Only half of the 16" x 20" map is used for play; displays for various point levels and holding boxes make up the other half. Thus, the 1st Cav's only decision is whether to come up the road fast or slow. A little better handling of the real estate would have allowed for some more scope to the relief operation. TFG's counter art is a bit weak. Departures from standard military symbols are fine, as long as there is some functional reason. In OPERATION PEGASUS, the silhouettes and unit designations seem to fall between novelty and whimsy.

OPERATION PEGASUS offers some interesting design innovations at the operational level, as well as an enjoyable game and a fairly good simulation. The game is a must for all contemporary era gamers, and the rest of us can re-live the famous helicopter attack scene from *Apocalypse Now* (with suitable Wagnerian music and appropriate chauvinistic slurs, of course). Four stars.

–Nick Schuessler

BOOKS

HOW TO SELL YOUR WARGAME DESIGN (written and published by Lou Zocchi); $4.00. 16-page 8½" x 11" booklet. Published 1975.

The title tells it all. This book is written by a professional designer to help other designers sell their games. It's not "how to design games," but "how to sell completed designs," with a discussion of the advantages and pitfalls of publishing things yourself.

Lou gets a lot into 16 pages. There's a great deal of advice and experience here (very small type!). For those trying to sell designs, there's a list of game publishing companies. For the designer who wants to be his own publisher, there is a list of service companies, covering everything from Adhesives to Vacuum Molding. There's also a listing of sales representatives.

The drawback – and it's a big one – is simply that this book was published in 1975. A lot of changes in five years. Most of the basic advice is still sound, but many of the names on those lists are certainly obsolete. And *don't* take the copyright advice. The laws have changed since Lou wrote this book. One other point: the advice for the produce-it-yourself designer is all aimed at low-budget publication. It tells you how to do a cheap-looking job without spending every cent you own.

On the whole, I recommend this book highly. I wish I'd seen it a year ago. If you ever intend to sell a design professionally, order this one. If you only learn one thing, your $4 will have been well spent.

–Steve Jackson

I can't believe how regular TSG is! You're better than prune juice – and to keep each issue so good as well as maintaining the monthly schedule (I got the December issue on November 26) is truly amazing. . . .

The best part of the latest issue was the fiction, and it's the best fiction I've read in a gaming zine yet – a well developed and presented story. Three cheers for Tim Zahn and I hope we will see more by him soon. . . .

Your reviews and designer articles are really appreciated. Many times it's been because of TSG that I bought or did not buy a specific game. . . .

Since I started reading special interest magazines, the best cover I've ever seen was on the Sept.-Oct. issue of *The General.* I think it is the best combination of illustration and game identification ever presented. . . .

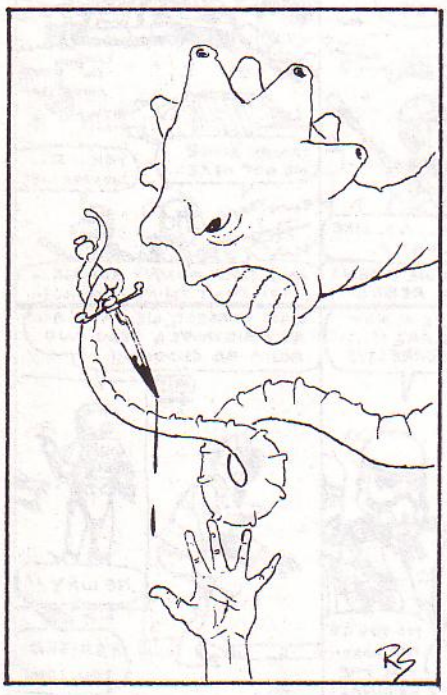
I'm probably going to buy *One-Page Bulge* and *Raid on Iran*; but I try not to buy any game until it is reviewed in TSG.

Ron Fisher
Asheville, NC

You will be happy to learn that I look forward to having Mr. Zahn as a regular contributor.

Please, someone, say something bad about us, so I can justify the art I like to run on the letters page . . .What the devil? No! GAAAH!

–FJ



Letters

I've just received TSG 33. The normal run of articles were good, as normal. *End Game*, though, was outstanding, which is saying a lot, as I normally rate such "1" on Feedback, because until this issue I've never seen any fiction in any gamezines worth reading. If you can maintain this quality of fiction in TSG, keep it up!

William Rutherford
Alexandria, VA

Recently, while reviewing my back issues of TSG, I came across the "Deus Ex Machina" article on computers and gaming by Bruce Webster in TSG 27. In that article, Mr. Webster presented an algorithm for computing adjacency for hexes numbered using the SPI notation. A quick analysis showed that there is an easier, clearer, and shorter method of obtaining the same results, as follows:

```
FACE = 7;

IF XX2 = XX1 THEN DO;
   IF YY2 = YY1 - 1 THEN
      FACE = 1;
   IF YY2 = YY1 + 1 THEN
      FACE = 4;
DOEND;

IF XX2 = XX1 + 1 THEN DO;
   IF YY2 = YY1 THEN
      FACE = 2;
IF YY2 = YY1 + 1 THEN
      FACE = 3;
DOEND;

IF XX2 = XX1 - 1 THEN DO;
   IF YY2 = YY1 THEN
      FACE = 6;
   IF YY2 = YY1 +1 THEN
      FACE = 5;
DOEND;

IF XX2 = XX1 AND YY2 = YY1 THEN
   FACE = 0;
```

This method eliminates four variables and in fact uses four fewer lines of code than Mr. Webster's version. I believe that this algorithm is easier to understand, also.

Bob Jarvis
USS Niagra Falls
FPO San Francisco

I was most pleased to see the *Warp War* article in the last TSG. I didn't agree with all of Steve's modifications, but I could see the reasoning that went into them. Tell him thanks for the work he did with it. . . .

I, for one, cast a hearty vote for more computer-related stuff, fantasy scenarios and good fiction. I wouldn't mind seeing occasional articles on historical/modern games, but not in every issue. . . .

The Apple ad was most humorous (for me, anyway). Did all you Apple owners go out and solicit or did Computerland come to you? Putting it opposite Bruce's column was well done. Maybe if I have another guest article you'll find a Sorcerer dealer who wants to advertise. . . .

Let our readers know why Metagaming says it can't ship any *Ogre* or *G.E.V.* micros for the next year and a half. . . .

Joseph R. Power
E. Lansing, MI

The Computerland ad was placed by a computer store. Ads from computer distributors are welcome.

Steve Jackson Games has contracted for the purchase of Ogre *and* G.E.V. *It plans to publish a new edition of each when the current legal controversy subsides.*

–FJ

I want to thank you heartily for the coverage of play-by-mail games in the November issue of *The Space Gamer,* especially for the Schubel & Son report and mention of us in your play-by-mail game survey. I believe you are the first to adequately cover this area of gaming and I'm sure it will show your readers your high level of awareness concerning the evolution of the gaming hobby. As one of the leaders in this area, we are very pleased to see such excellent objective coverage in the gaming press.

George V. Schubel
Manager
Schubel & Son

The main change I've seen in TSG is the ownership. It's no longer a house magazine operated as a necessary evil. You pay more attention to what the readers want, as evidenced by the protective mailing cover, resulting from a letter in TSG 28. You're giving coverage to other companies in capsule reviews. You do not promote slower-selling Metagaming products by repeated articles on them. By going monthly you had more room for all of these without making per-issue price too high for those who just want an article or two.

Mark J. Bassett
Laurel, MD

Judging from p. 2 of no. 33, you're overly concerned about TSG's being typed a "house organ" for SJG. There are house organs which are disgraceful puff sheets, praising only their own stuff and knocking good competitors. There are house organs like the *Journal of the T.A.S.* which would be much *less* useful if it were anything else. And there are those like DW and SA, which are general, but have a definite home-grown flavor, a greater affinity for one game-system, which is all to the good for players with a similar affinity. The important factor is not who owns what, or how many pages of coverage of this or that, but a question of editorial quality and integrity.

In other words, it is really not the kind of question you can decide in advance, and certainly not the kind *we* should vote on in advance. Give SJG a free ad per issue, plus any leftover holes, run an article about your new games *whenever it is a better article than the other choices for the same slot,* and let it work itself out. People who want to know what you are up to will naturally assume that TSG is the horse's mouth. If you don't tell 'em, who will? But don't apologize; it makes people think you're doing something sneaky and want them to forgive you in advance.

Draper Kauffman
St. Louis, MO

READER ADS

Reader ads are available to individuals (not to companies). $5 per insertion; limit 20 words or four lines.

Catacombs Constructor needs furnishings – traps, treasures, monsters, scenery, etc. Contributors to receive copy. Mark Bassett, 8438 Snowden, Laurel, MD 20811.

AUSTIN AREA WARGAMERS are invited to the TSG playtest sessions. Want to play, discuss, and review new games from various mfrs? Call 447-7866 for information.

News & Plugs

The Dungeoneer and *The Judges' Guild Journal* have merged into one publication, *The Dungeoneer Journal.*

GDW's "Billion Credit Squadron" tournament, which was reported on in TSG 33, has grown a thousandfold, into the Trillion Credit Squadron. Competitions have been planned for Origins, Eastcon, and Gencon.

CALENDAR

December 27-January 2, 1980-1: An AD&D marathon will be held by two Omaha, NE stores; other games will be played. Contact The Dragon's Lair, 8316 Blondo St., Omaha, NE 68134.

January 16-18, 1981: ORCCON 1981. Strategy game con, to be held at the Sheraton-Anaheim Hotel in Anaheim, CA. Contact OrcCon, c/o Mark A. Snowden, 1864 Nutwood Place, Anaheim, CA 92804.

January 16-18, 1981: USACON 3. Gaming con for SF&F, RP, and boardgaming. University of South Alabama in Mobile, AL. Contact Leo Vaulin, 5865 Lisloy Dr., Moblie, AL 36608.

February 6-8, 1981: GENCON SOUTH '81. Gaming con. Contact Gencon South Convention Comittee, 5333 Santa Monica Blvd N, Jacksonville, FL 32207.

February 14-16, 1981: DUNDRACON VI. FRP gaming con, Oakland, CA. Contact @ 386 Alcatraz Ave., Oakland, CA 94618.

March 13-15, 1981: COASTCON. Royal D'Iberville. Contact Coastcon 81, P.O. Box 6025, Biloxi, MS 39532.

March 20-21, 1981: SIMCON III. Con for fantasy role-playing games. University of Rochester in Rochester, NY. Contact SimCon III, Box 5142, Rochester, NY 14627.

March 20-22, 1981: LUNACON '81. Films, art show, wargaming. Contact LunaCon '81, P.O. Box 204, Brooklyn, NY 11230.

April 9-12, 1981: COLLEGECON 2. F&SF con. Contact CollegeCon 2, c/o Larry Taylor, University of Houston, N-23 UC, Program Council, 4800 Calhoun, Houston, TX 77004.

May 22-25, 1981: GRIMCON III. F/SF gaming con, Oakland Hyatt House, 455 Hegenberger Road, Oakland, CA 94612. Contact P.O. Box 4153, Berkeley, CA 94704.

July 3-5, 1921: ORIGINS '81: To be held in Dunfee Motel, San Mateo, CA. Contact Origins '81, P.O. Box 5833, San Jose, CA 95150.

July 24-26, 1981: ATLANTICON. New wargaming convention. Contact AtlantiCon, Inc., P.O. Box 15405, Baltimore, MD 21220.

August 21-24, 1981: GENCON XIII. FRPG & new gaming releases. Contact GenCon XIII, P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

September 3-7, 1981: DENVENTION TWO. SF con. Contact Denvention Two, P.O. Box 11545, Denver, CO 80211 or (303) 433-9774.

September 11-13, 1981: DRAGON FLIGHT, a FRP con, to be held in Seattle. Contact The Brass Dragon Society, P.O. Box 33872, Seattle, WA 98133.

CONVENTION ORGANIZERS – let us know about your con! Free publicity never hurts.

Games Merchant, a monthly tabloid consisting mainly of gaming-related advertisements, will begin publication in January. Direct-mail copies will cost $.50. Contact Games Merchant, c/o Alex Marciniszyn, P.O. Box 10068, Detroit, MI 48210.

ZocMarZ is no more. Forest Brown has moved his company, Martian Metals, back to Texas. (He complains of zoning and production problems in Mississippi.)

The publishers of *Starlog* are now offering *Fantasy Modeling,* a 48-page slick quarterly. Subscription: $8.99. Sample copy: $3.25.

The Canadian postal strike has subsided. De Jager has resumed *The Assassin's Quest.*

PECULIAR NEWS – SPI's press release last month announced the appointment of a "new chief executive officer," but failed to mention he was replacing James Dunnigan, who evidently will stay on as vice-president.

Flying Buffalo PBM customers can now send in their turns via The Source electronic mail system (assuming they have the necessary terminals and interfaces, and charge cards for billing purposes).

SPI has released *The Big Red One,* a game which their ad promos claim was adapted in part from Lorimar Productions' "The Big Red One" movie. Those reading the small print will recognize it as a reissue of their *Bulge.*

The Good Guys by JD

SOMEWHERE, ON THE PLANET ARGOS V... TWO MERCENARIES...
HEY BORIS, THE REBEL PRINCESS AND HUNK HAVE BEEN CAPTURED!
ARE YOU SURE SNIDELY?...
AHG!
VORP!
YEP, I SAW IT IN THE LAST SPACEGAMER!
WE OUGHTA RESCUE THEM!! WE'RE REBELS TOO, YA KNOW...
YAH YOU'RE RIGHT..., SAY SNIDELY, HAVE YOU NOTICED ANYTHING FUNNY YET...
ZEEE
POW!
POW!
UH... NO, LIKE WHAT?.....
WELL, LIKE HOW WE HAVEN'T SEEN ANY OTHER REBEL -
TUN!
TROOPS SINCE WE GOT HERE...
YAH... I... WONDER WHY...
YORP!
AND THAT FUNNY RUMBLE... ...YOU DON'T THINK... NAW!...
MEANWHILE,... BACK ON THE IMPERIAL STAR DESTROYER
UNHAND ME! YOU CLONE!!
WHAT!...WHO'S A CLONE?...
YEA... I THINK YOU ARE, STEVE...
WAIT A MINUTE! I'M NOT THE CLONE! YOU ARE!!... MORON! RIGHT, FORREST?
?
WHA!... MORON!?! NOT ME! I'M THE ORIGINAL!!!....
NO YOU'RE NOT AARON, I'M THE ORIGINAL!
WAIT FORREST, WE CAN'T ALL BE ORIGINALS! YOU TWO GOTTA BE CLONES!!...
EXIT
NO WAY!!
YEA, SEE YOU, IDIOT!
JDW
"FLUKE"... USE THE FORCE... ... THE FORCE ....
OBESE BUM... KENOBI?? IS THAT YOU?...
!!!
YOU DIRTY RAT! WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA ANYWAY
YOU NEVER SAID NUTHIN' ABOUT PAIN, TORTURE, AND CAPTURE WHEN I VOLUNTEERED TO BECOME A HERO!!!
... WHAT'S HAPPENED TO HUNK?
... WILL THE PRINCESS ESCAPE?
... WHO CARES!?! .....
... CAN FLUKE USE FORCE...
... AND WHAT ABOUT SMELLY?...
ON SECOND THOUGHT... FORGET IT...
NEXT ISSUE... MORE MADNESS

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Yes, it had to happen. Steve Jackson – the designer of OGRE, G.E.V., and THE FANTASY TRIP – is now in business on his own. An independent publisher. Designing the kind of games you want to play – and producing them with the quality you'd expect from far more expensive packages. Full-color maps and covers . . . illustrated rules . . . multi-color counters . . . at $3 per game! Read on . . .

THREE NEW GAMES:

RAID ON IRAN. What if the rescue mission had gone in? Special Forces vs. Iranian "militants" on a map of the US embassy. For 1 or 2 players. Could you have freed the hostages?

ONE-PAGE BULGE. The biggest "little" Battle of the Bulge game: 13" x 16" map, 112 counters, turn record chart, and *one page* of detailed rules. A must for any WWII gamer. For 1 or 2 players.

KUNG FU 2100. Martial-arts killers try to destroy the tyrant CloneMaster in this s-f game. Features an innovative man-to-man combat system. 1 or 2 players.

AND A NEW PLAY AID:

For any fantasy or role-playing game - beautiful 25mm miniatures that fold out of *cardboard*. Each figure shows front facing on one side, back on the other. CARDBOARD HEROES: 40 *full-color* figures for only $3.00.

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Help stamp out "turkey" games . . . subscribe to *The Space Gamer*. TSG reviews *every* s-f or fantasy game published (including computer games) – and important modern/historical games as well. Your subscription will pay for itself the first time you're steered away from a turkey – or toward a good game you would have missed. TSG also carries variants, strategy articles, fiction (with related game scenarios) – and much more. Monthly: $21 for one year, $39 for two years.

NOTE: TSG subscribers pay NO POSTAGE when ordering from Steve Jackson Games. Subscribe today - and start saving!

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Please allow 2 weeks for 1st class, or 4-6 weeks for 3rd class. Sorry – we cannot accept retail orders from outside the U.S. and Canada at present. U.S. dollars only, please. Texas residents add 5% sales tax on game purchases.

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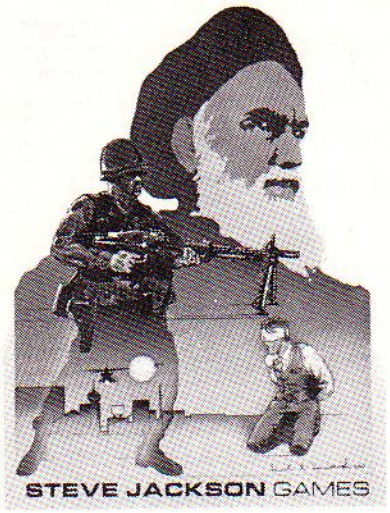
STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Yes, it had to happen. Steve Jackson – the designer of OGRE, G.E.V., and THE FANTASY TRIP – is now in business on his own. An independent publisher. Designing the kind of games you want to play – and producing them with the quality you'd expect from far more expensive packages. Full-color maps and covers . . . illustrated rules . . . multi-color counters . . . at $3 per game! Read on . . .

RAID ON IRAN



Can you free the hostages?

A simulation game about the U.S. raid into Tehran. If the raid had gone in, Special Forces teams would have battled Iranian fanatics – with the hostages' lives in the balance. An alternate scenario explores the possibility that the *Ayatollah* might have been the raid's target.

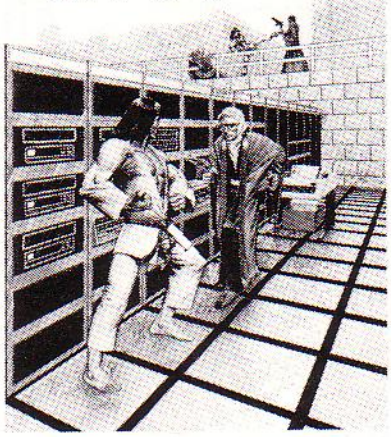
Rules cover U.S. surprise, mob action, helicopter breakdown (of course!), undercover aid, panicked/berserk militants, and more. For one or two players; playing time under 90 minutes.

RAID ON IRAN includes a full-color 16" x 21" map of the embassy grounds, 119 counters in 3 colors, illustrated rules sheet, and tables.

Game design by Steve Jackson.

Desperate battles against an immortal dictator . . .

KUNG FU 2100



For years the CloneMasters have ruled the world. Their only foes are the Terminators – trained from birth in the martial arts. Now *you* are a Terminator. With only two companions, you must smash your way into the fortress of the CloneMaster – to destroy him forever.

But his guards are many and loyal. Like you, they can kill with a single blow. And time is against you . . .

KUNG FU 2100 includes 114 counters in 3 colors; 16" x 21" rules sheet; 10" x 21" color map; extra CRT and record sheets; ziplock bag. For 1 or 2 players; plays in under 1½ hours.

Designed by B. Dennis Sustare. Edited by Steve Jackson and Forrest Johnson.

CARDBOARD HEROES

FULL-COLOR 25mm miniatures – printed on heavy card stock. Each figure folds to form its own base. Front facing is shown on one side (see above); rear facing is on the reverse.

Your fantasy battles will have all the detail and excitement of miniatures – without the cost, weight, and painting hassle of metal figures. And you'll seldom see ANY miniatures as beautifully colored and detailed as these.

Set 1 has the heroes for all your games: men, elves, dwarves, halflings, fighters, wizards, clerics, thieves . . . 40 figures in all . . . only $3.

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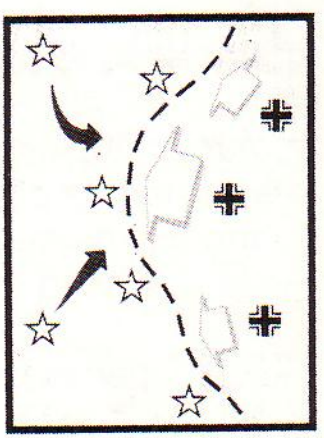

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

It started as a challenge: Design a good wargame with *only one page* of rules. ONE-PAGE BULGE met the challenge! A regimental-level simulation of the Battle of the Bulge – with complete, detailed rules – including weather and Allied air superiority, German supply and isolation, and optional rules for bridge destruction and capture of Allied supplies.

Components include 16" x 13" full-color map, 112 counters in 3 colors, turn record track with CRT, ziplock bag, and *one page* (8" x 11", both sides) of rules. For 1 or 2 players; playing time 1 to 2 hours.

Game design by Steve Jackson.

Please send me the following: ( ) RAID ON IRAN ( ) KUNG FU 2100 ( ) ONE-PAGE BULGE ( ) CARDBOARD HEROES. I have enclosed $3 for each item, plus 25 cents per item for 3rd class postage, or 50 cents per item for 1st class postage. Texas residents please add 5% sales tax.

Please allow 2 weeks for 1st class, or 4-6 weeks for 3rd class. Sorry – we cannot accept retail orders from outside the US and Canada at present. Hobby store and distributor inquiries invited.

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Subscribers to THE SPACE GAMER get free postage on game orders. If you subscribe to TSG, use the order form on your mailer cover or include your mailing label. Or subscribe now ($21 for 12 monthly issues, $39 for 24 issues) – and your game postage is free.

The Martians are looking for a few good fantasies!

Yes, having abandoned all attempt to compensate for that gravitransitional fluxation of yours that keeps prutzing our inertializers and standing the printing plant on its sides, we've gone back to doing what we do best.

(Well said! The building even stopped shaking.)

Of course. Anyway, what we do best is miniatures: unEarthly craftsmanship like our **DRAGONSLAYERS**™ 15mm and 25mm lines, great for fantasy-adventure role-playing in any realm.

(Just move that interminibilator on out of here quietly. He's doing another ad.)

(Hold it down, you guys!)

(Sorry.)

To continue: **DRAGONSLAYERS**™ give you the same high-quality and attention to detail that you've come to know in our **TRAVELLER**™ miniatures. And in assortments with variety enough to populate whole worlds of adventure.

(Sheer poetry . . . Do go on . . .)

Heroes and villains, beasties and ghoulies. Mighty magi and mighty uglies. Figures so lifelike you'd think they could move—

(I think the interminibilator just did! . . .

YOIP!)

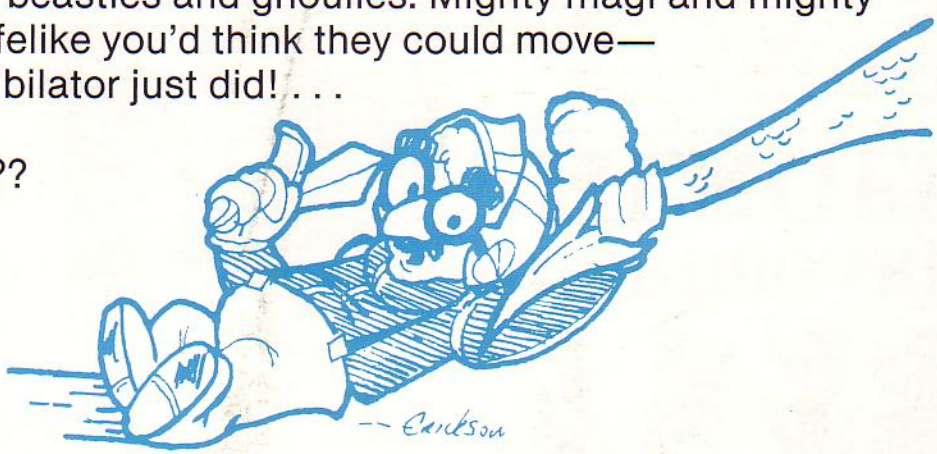
Hey, are you alright??

(. . . throw down

I think I'm going to

ladder. QUICK.

Tell Butch to get a



Martian Metals

EARTHLINGS! Martian Metals has MOVED! Our Venusian enemies located our old secret headquarters in Gulfport. All correspondence, orders, ham sandwiches, and doshes should be addressed to our new TOP secret headquarters:

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